

I am testifying in opposition to bill HB 1540 .

This bill threatens the integrity of our public education system by using taxpayer dollars for private schools. Private schools are not held to the same transparency, accountability, or accessibility standards as public schools.

North Dakotans have consistently opposed voucher programs, and i strongly urge you to do the same.

Public funds should remain in public schools, where they serve all students, regardless of ability, background, or financial status. Our public schools are the foundation of our communities, and instead of diverting resources away from them, we should be investing in smaller class sizes, support staff, mental health resources, and competitive wages for educators.

As an educator I have worked with families that have had their child turned away or expelled because they did not fit the image the private institution has. I have spoken with superintendents, administrators, teachers, and families from others states about vouchers and how it has affected their communities. Unfortunately no one has had stores of success. There have been many stories shared about increase in tuition, loss of public funding hurting smaller areas, and the overall cost to run the vouchers increasing.

I strongly urge you to vote NO on this bill and to stand with North Dakota's students, families, and educators in preserving a strong public education system.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your service to our state and look forward to your support in keeping public dollars in public schools.