

North Dakota House Education Committee  
600 E Boulevard Ave.  
Bismarck, ND 58505

## **RE: Opposition to House Bill 1569 – Sex Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Curriculum**

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

As the Director of Standards-Based Instruction for Fargo Public Schools, I am writing to express my concerns regarding House Bill 1569, which mandates sex trafficking awareness and prevention instruction in North Dakota schools. While addressing sex trafficking is an important issue, this bill does not align with North Dakota's current curriculum development process, creates an unfunded mandate, and raises concerns about local control and curriculum oversight.

### **Lack of Alignment with North Dakota State Standards**

HB 1569 bypasses North Dakota's established curriculum review and standards alignment process, which ensures instructional integrity and developmental appropriateness. Best practices in curriculum development require a systematic approach that integrates topics meaningfully within existing courses rather than legislatively mandating standalone topics. If sex trafficking education is to be included, it should be vetted through the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) curriculum review process, ensuring proper alignment with state-approved standards.

### **Unfunded Mandate on Schools**

HB 1569 mandates new instructional requirements without allocating funding or professional development support for educators. Implementing a comprehensive curriculum on a sensitive topic such as sex trafficking requires specialized training for teachers, access to high-quality instructional materials, and support for counselors and staff who may need to address difficult student disclosures. Without dedicated funding, districts will struggle to meet the mandate effectively, forcing them to either divert resources from other essential educational programs or implement incomplete instruction.

### **Infringement on Local Control and Curriculum Decision-Making**

North Dakota has long upheld local control in education, allowing school districts to tailor instruction to meet the needs of their students and communities. While the bill allows some flexibility in curriculum selection, it still mandates a state-imposed curriculum approval process rather than trusting districts to work with educators, counselors, and subject-matter experts to develop age-appropriate, research-based content.

## Lack of Consideration for Developmentally Appropriate Implementation

The bill allows for instruction to begin in grade seven but mandates instruction before grade twelve, without clear guidelines on age appropriateness. Educators, not legislators, should determine when and how students engage with such sensitive content to ensure effectiveness and student well-being. This rigid mandate does not provide the necessary flexibility to integrate such instruction within the developmental and social-emotional readiness of students.

## Conclusion

While sex trafficking awareness and prevention are critical issues, HB 1569 is not the right approach. It circumvents established curriculum review processes, imposes an unfunded mandate, restricts local control, and lacks a research-based framework for age-appropriate instruction. If legislators wish to support this important topic, they should work through the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and the state standards review process rather than imposing a legislative directive that lacks proper educational alignment.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose HB 1569 and instead support a research-driven, locally controlled, and fully funded approach to addressing sex trafficking awareness and prevention in schools.

Sincerely,

Dr. Liann M. Hanson  
Director of Standards-Based Instruction  
Fargo Public Schools