

Verbal Testimony for the North Dakota House Education Committee
Tuesday, Mar 11, 2025

Good afternoon, Chairman Heinert and Members of the House Education Committee. Thank you for allowing me to share my experiences with you today. My name is Bobbi Smith. I am currently a teacher in a 4th/5th grade classroom at a Public Charter School in rural Utah. I was born and raised in North Dakota in a small town called Carson; it's about 60 miles SW of Bismarck. The town I grew up in had a population of about 150 people. My roots and heart are deeply embedded in this state. My father, brother, and extended family reside here in Bismarck. I love this state, I am proud that it will forever be where I call home and I am honored to be able to speak to you today.

I have been an educator for 24 years. I began my career working in a traditional school in a metro area where I taught grades first through fifth. I have also worked in a rapidly growing district), an inner city school district , and a suburban district). All of these experiences have shaped my educational philosophy, and while they have informed my teaching they were never truly satisfying to me. After 12 years of teaching, I was unsure if I even wanted to continue my career in education. Luckily I found charter schools.

I had always heard rumors about charter schools, but had never experienced one myself. Now, I have spent 13 years teaching in a charter school, experiencing first hand how Public charter schools serve as an option for students, parents, and teachers. My public charter school in many ways reminds me of how I went to school. Small classes, personalized learning, and a strong interconnected community just like the community I grew up in. The school gave me a sense of community and belonging wherel felt recognized and was awarded so many more opportunities to grow as a teacher.

In a public charter school as a teacher your voice is heard and matters. I have found that public charter schools are a great choice for parents, teachers, and students to find the place that best fits their learning and educational philosophies. I have fallen in love with my charter school and I hope that this committee will help make it possible for parents, students, and teachers like myself to have this opportunity in my home state.

I would like to thank you for your time today for me to share my experiences as a charter school teacher. I'd be more than happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you!

Warm Regards;

Bobbi Smith
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