

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing in hopes that you will **VOTE NO** on SB 2400, which would set up an Educational Savings Account for non-public school students.

Education is and always has been an important pillar of my family. I come from a long line of educators in the state of North Dakota. I have taught in Devils Lake, North Dakota for 20 years. And, I have two children going through the public school system.

I believe all children should receive a strong education. I believe all families have a choice to send their children to whatever school they feel is necessary for their children to succeed. And, I believe North Dakota has one of the best educational systems in the nation.

However, why do we feel it is necessary to send public tax dollars to private schools? If private schools were required by the state to follow the same expectations, laws, and regulations, then yes, send our public tax dollars there. But, they are not required to do so. So, I ask again, why would the state fund a private school with public tax dollars?

According to the National Center of Education Statistics, in 2021, North Dakota had 50 private schools with 13,690 students. In 2022, North Dakota had 511 schools with roughly 118, 513 students. This proposal sending \$60 million dollars this biennium to 14,000 students in the state of North Dakota does not make sense when 90% of your school educated students attend a public school.

The money that is being proposed in this bill could be used in the public schools in various ways. This includes updating buildings, special education and teacher recruitment/retention, transportation costs, and to fill school lunch account balances that the district is required to pay back at the end of the year.

I urge you to consider VOTING NO on SB 2400. I hope you choose to strengthen our public schools with the earmarked \$60 million dollars rather than sending it to private schools.

Thank you,
Courtney Klein