

March 17, 2025

Dear Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on SB 2400. My name is Shelly Moltzen from Jamestown, N.D. I have lived in this state my entire life, am the product of public education, have worked as a teacher for my entire career in public schools, and have two daughters who have been lucky to be educated in our public schools. This is an issue close to my heart, and I urge you to vote no on this bill and any other legislation that involves moving public tax dollars away from public education to pay for private school education.

As a taxpayer and parent, I want my tax dollars to serve the greater good. Funding public schools benefits our entire society and offers ALL students an opportunity to receive a high-quality education. The heart of a strong democracy is an educated citizenry. That's one of the most important functions of public education. SB 2400 would spend at least 60 million dollars on non-public schools, just in this biennium. Moves like this will weaken our public schools and ultimately hurt our citizens. Whether it is a bill proposing vouchers or education savings accounts, if it is taking tax dollars away from the public schools, that is not right.

As a parent and an educator, I know that our public schools offer high-quality instruction with amazing results. I can attest to the fact that my children have been educated in a system that pushes them to excel, offers them sound educational experiences, and makes them ready for the next steps of their lives in which they will become successful and contributing members of our communities. We need this for ALL North Dakota students. Diverting funds to private schools will weaken programs and opportunities that our tax dollars should be supporting, and which enrich the lives of North Dakota's children. Instead of taking money from our public schools and giving it to private organizations, we should invest more in public education.

I urge you to vote no on this bill and any legislation aimed at moving funding away from public education. Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelly R. Moltzen

Jamestown ND

