

## Testimony in Opposition to SB 2400

North Dakota Legislative Committee Hearing 3-18-25

Good Morning Chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Laura Taylor and I am a homeschool parent in North Dakota. I am testifying today in opposition to SB 2400, which seeks to implement Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) for private and home education. While this bill may seem beneficial on the surface, it ultimately creates more problems than solutions—especially for homeschool families.

### Concerns About SB 2400 and ESAs for Homeschoolers

#### 1. Threat to Homeschool Independence

One of the key reasons families choose homeschooling is to maintain full control over their children's education. Accepting ESA funds could subject homeschoolers to state mandates, including standardized curriculum requirements or government-approved educational materials. This could force homeschoolers to conform to a one-size-fits-all approach rather than the personalized, flexible education that makes homeschooling effective.

#### 2. ESAs Set a Dangerous Precedent

Initially, ESA programs might come with few strings attached, but history shows that government funding often leads to more control over time. What begins as an optional program can evolve into increased regulations for all homeschoolers, even those who do not accept ESA funds. This could jeopardize the autonomy of North Dakota's homeschooling community in the long run.

#### 3. Financial Strings and Restrictions on Educational Materials

With ESA funds, the government would likely determine what qualifies as an "educational expense." Many homeschoolers use a wide range of learning resources, from religious curricula to hands-on learning experiences. ESA programs in other states have prohibited certain purchases, including religious materials. This bill could force families to shift their educational approach just to meet state-imposed spending guidelines.

#### 4. ESAs Undermine the True Purpose of Homeschooling

Homeschooling is not about avoiding public school; it's about providing children with a truly customized education. By introducing state funding into homeschooling, SB 2400 could erode the independence that has allowed homeschool families to thrive. Families should not have to choose between financial assistance and educational freedom.

Thank you for your time and consideration.