

3/18/2025

Dear Representatives,

I am submitting this testimony in opposition to SB 2400. I know that the representatives working to pass this bill have good hearts—they want to help. I also believe that those representatives believe that they have taken into consideration homeschoolers and feel that the verbiage has been protective of their rights. In North Dakota, we feel that we are different; we're smarter than those other states. We think that what's happened in other states won't happen to us because we have put appropriate measures in place to protect homeschooling freedoms. I urge you as a constituent to take further action to protect homeschoolers from the potential ramifications of SB 2400. Twenty years from now, let your legacy be that you protected freedom. Don't let your tenure be the start of the erosion of freedoms for the many to serve the few homeschoolers who want ESA money. In other states, homeschoolers have seen more and more controls being placed on homeschoolers in the years following government assistance.

With all due respect, I believe that the legislatures and the attorneys assisting them with this bill do not have the lived experience of those in the homeschooling community and they are misguided by those who want this money. This bill may seem to have the appropriate protection for homeschoolers, but other states have seen, not in their current legislative session, but in future sessions, additional stipulations and controls being placed on homeschoolers.

I urge the legislators on the committee to put a firewall of protection around our freedoms. Those who want ESA money can do so under a separate "opt-in" designation from those who "opt-out." Nine states with ESAs have such firewalls and it has been proving effective to protect these freedoms. I'm nearly certain you have heard the reasoning for this many times, so I will not list those reasons here.

Home Educators such as I simply want to be amended out of SB 2400. We don't want to expend time worrying and lobbying for freedoms—we just want to teach our kids. The money sounds very appealing to me. We are not wealthy people but have chosen to sacrifice to give our children an education that they can only get through my husband and me.

I have one son and one daughter who have graduated thus far, and both are brilliant. They are outstanding citizens. Both should finish their Masters degrees within the upcoming year. Without going into detail, please know that both have pursued their unique dreams in huge ways that public or privately schooled kids simply can't, and I have been profoundly grateful for the freedom they have been given in North Dakota to do that. Please protect it by amending us out of this bill.

Thank you for your service. I know that it is a labor of love to serve our state in the legislature. Please know that your time and energy is greatly appreciated!

Very Respectfully,

Kathy Miiller

Bismarck, ND