

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION**  
**TO HB 1145**

House Judiciary Committee

Date of Hearing: January 14, 2024

Denise Dykeman 1840 12<sup>th</sup> St SW, Minot, ND 58701

My name is Denise Dykeman. I am a resident of Minot, North Dakota, and a life-long practicing Lutheran.

This written testimony is presented in opposition to HB 1145

In the United States it is the business of families and houses of worship to teach religion, not public schools. It is not appropriate or a good use of taxpayer dollars to post them in public schools. This bill will violate families' religious freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment of the US Constitution and will likely result in expensive and unnecessary litigation that ND will be required to defend and ultimately lose.

According to press accounts, the rationale for posting the 10 Commandments in schools is that the ND Constitution is based on the 10 Commandments. That information can be discussed in a history class without posting a religious document for daily display in our public schools to indoctrinate youth. If teaching children about the Constitution is the goal, then simply post copies of the Constitution.

Pushing Christian principles is the goal of this bill; not promoting an understanding of the Constitution.

The founders of our great nation understood that the separation of church and state is key to the freedom of religion. All people in the United States, including our children, are free to practice their religion, or not practice any religion at all. To ensure this freedom, public spaces must be neutral; not purporting to promote one religion over another. Nowhere is this more important than a school.

Article VII, Section 1 of the North Dakota Constitution recognizes this as well and declares that a **free education is necessary for all children of the State of North Dakota and must be “free from sectarian control.”**<sup>1</sup>

Please follow the North Dakota Constitution and the First Amendment of the US Constitution. Finally, please respect our citizens who do not want their children subjected to religious indoctrination in a public school. It is a wonderful diversity of ideas and beliefs that truly make America great.

Thank you for your consideration.

Please oppose HB 1145.

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<sup>1</sup> Constitution of North Dakota, Article VIII Section 1