

**Chairman Beard and Members of the Senate Education Committee,**

My name is Matt Liebel, and I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 1540. As a public school parent, a former public school teacher, and a passionate advocate for quality education, I urge you to reject this harmful legislation.

Regardless of the terminology—whether education savings accounts, scholarships, or tax credits—if public funds are being diverted from our public schools to private institutions, these programs function as vouchers. This redirection of taxpayer dollars undermines the foundation of our public education system, which exists to serve **all** children, regardless of ability, income, or background.

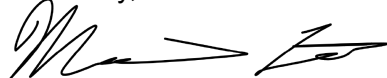
**The vast majority of North Dakota families rely on public schools.** In fact, **93% of North Dakota's students attend public schools**, yet this bill prioritizes funding mechanisms that benefit private institutions, which are inaccessible to most families. Additionally, **only 32% of counties in North Dakota have access to a private school**, meaning the majority of our communities would see no benefit from HB 1540. Instead of strengthening education for all, this bill diverts critical resources away from the schools that serve nearly every child in our state.

Public schools are the cornerstone of our communities. Unlike private schools, they are required to serve every child, meet rigorous academic standards, and remain accountable to taxpayers. Instead of siphoning public dollars into private institutions that can set their own admissions policies and operate without the same level of oversight, we should be prioritizing investments in **our** schools—ensuring that educators, support staff, mental health resources, and students have the funding and support they need to thrive.

HB 1540 is a step in the wrong direction. I urge you to stand with our students, families, and communities by **voting NO** on this bill. Our public schools—and the future of our children—depend on it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Matt Liebel

District 1

Williston, ND