

To Committee Members,

I am writing in support of HB 1540 as I am a firm believer in giving families as much support as possible to allow their sons and daughters the opportunity to afford the cost of tuition to whatever school they feel will best help their child succeed in life, both academically and socially/emotionally. In my 15 years as a teacher and coach, my first two years in public schools in ND followed by six years in Catholic education in MN and now seven more in Bismarck at St. Mary's Central HS, I have seen many families who rely heavily on extra funds to allow their student to receive the private education they feel is important to the development of their child. The extra funds come from scholarships, parents working extra jobs, work study on campus, and even having to use money earned working as a high school student just to afford the cost of tuition. Every penny matters in these students' lives and the fact that families in ND could use their own, hard-earned money to go towards helping their child attend the school they see fit, without hurting the funding of tax dollars to the public-school setting, seems like an easy decision to make to pass this bill.

Bud (BJ) Etzold