



Mr Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education committee,

My name is Joe Drumm. I'm a Science teacher, Coach, advocate for public schools and citizen of North Dakota. I'm urging you to vote DO NOT PASS on HB 1540.

I've written and provided testimony this entire session on Education related bills, and 1540 will be no exception. This bill seeks to create an ESA account with very little 'accountability', instead focusing on getting dollars into the hands of private school families and institutions.

My biggest talking point all session has been accountability, and this bill goes out of its way to assert that private schools, homeschooling and other adjacent qualifying parties would NOT be accountable to the state. As outlined before, as a public school teacher I'm accountable to my principal, who's accountable to the superintendent, who's accountable to the board which is accountable to the public (via voting) and the state legislation.

The public has multiple avenues of input in the educational process, and gets input in how my school spends its dollars. The state subsidizing entities that have no such accountability is bad practice and policy. **68% of North Dakotans agree.** They don't want public dollars being spent on private entities. Vouchers have a history of leading to a decline in funding to public schools, inherently hurting the 2/3 of students who don't have access to private schools anyway (and may not be able to homeschool) ... all of these points have been made before through this entire legislative session.

The fact of the matter is (as outlined in several other testimonials I've given), schools are hurting. Inflation, rising insurance costs, rising cost of living ... All of these contribute to the crunch ND schools feel. Diverting funds in this way does not improve the greatest public good we offer our youth in this state: public education.

I encourage the team that penned this (and all other ESA like legislation) to keep looking for creative ways to fund, support and enrich public schools but to not place these funds into private entities. Our schools do not need creative ways for funding to leave our doors, we need more revenue coming in to combat these issues.

I strongly encourage this committee to reject HB 1540 and vote 'do not pass' on this legislation. Thank you for your work, time and consideration.

J Drumm