

My name is Sister Lillian Long. I am writing in opposition to HB 1540.

Our public tax dollars should be used for public purposes. Diverting tax dollars from Public Schools to Private schools is harmful to our Public schools. You have recently denied paying for meals for ND students with the rationale being not enough money to provide those meals. Instead of diverting public money to private schools, I encourage legislators and community members to invest in our public school children, expanding universal school meals, supporting mental health resources, and keeping class sizes manageable.

Private schools do not have to provide services that are required of public schools. My nephew had his two oldest children in a Catholic School. They loved the school and education they received. However, their youngest child had special needs. The private school did not have the ability (nor requirement) to meet her needs. So, she was enrolled in the public school. Meeting the needs of those students who need special attention is costly and falls on the budgets of public schools. Private schools can cherry pick whichever students they choose to educate, leaving the public schools carrying the burden of providing required care for any and all students, regardless of their abilities.

At this time, with uncertain funding at the federal level, our state's most vulnerable students risk losing the most.

Public funds should NOT be going to private schools. Taxpayers money is for PUBLIC entities.

Sister Lillian Long
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