

I urge you to vote against HB 1540 and give it a DO NOT Pass recommendation. It benefits private school students at the expense of our public-school students, who make up the majority of students in our state. It is also a threat to religious liberty in our state and goes against "separation of church and state." It is also not fiscally responsible.

There are many reasons why private schools should not get tax dollars. Private schools do not have to answer to the state for how they spend money like public schools do. They are not held to the same standards in terms of accommodating students. However, educating students on IEPs or students with other disabilities adds extra costs and time requirements for public schools. Private schools do not have to accept these students. If private schools are going to get this extra funding, they should be subject to the same requirements as public schools.

What about the Establishment Clause in keeping with the vision of "separation of church and state" outlined by our founding fathers.

I am concerned about this bill's effect on religious liberty. In *Carson v. Makin* (2022), <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2021/20-1088>, the Supreme Court ruled that funding given by a state to private schools needs to go to religious private schools equally. In our state, we have a number of private religious schools. This means this bill will send taxpayer dollars to schools that promote a certain religion. This violates our country's long-held separation of church and state ideals. North Dakotans' tax dollars would potentially fund religious institutions that conflict with one's own religion. Tax money collected from Lutheran North Dakotans should not have to fund private Catholic schools and vice-versa. Again "separation of church and state. "

Public schools' is important in ND as many children live in rural areas where private schools are not an option. Funding going to other schools is money taken from those rural public schools most ND children rely on. The bulk of the money comes from taxpayers who are unable to afford private schools and should be used for public education, which will benefit the majority of our children.

Again, I urge you to vote against HB 1540 and give it a DO NOT Pass recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration.
Barb Carley