

Chair Beard and members of the Senate Education committee:

I urge a DO NOT PASS recommendation out of this committee on HB 1540.

HB 1540 will take taxpayer money for public schools and divert it to private schools. There are so many things wrong with this. You ought to be appalled by the idea, but let's talk about it pragmatically and with a broad lens.

Who stands to gain from this? 93% of ND's student population go to PUBLIC schools. What if every parent in ND decides they want the voucher, credit, money, etc. that the legislature will lawfully provide to send their kids to a private school?

There aren't enough private schools. Any idea like this ought to scale to every person that it could possibly apply to, but it cannot. Most rural communities have zero access. Already, we have a problem. There is no school choice in rural ND. This bill is using public money, but it's not for the public, because the entire public does not have access.

Even in Fargo, ND's biggest population center, there's nowhere near the private school infrastructure to support all students. So, who gets in? Who gets preference and why? Who do you think Shanley, Oak Grove, etc. are going to let into their schools? Who has the best chance to get in? You know where this discussion is going, right? It's going to a hurtful, hateful, and unfair place.

Let's be honest with ourselves; all this bill will do is take millions of taxpayer dollars that would otherwise fund public schools and distribute it to folks that don't need it.

As a former teacher at a private school and a parent of public school students, I'm concerned.

Thanks for listening,

Ryan Dodd
District 45, Fargo