

Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am Brenda Seehafer, an elementary Title I reading and math teacher from Rolla, ND. I am asking you to oppose HB 1540. This bill provides \$4,000 to any student who attends private school, costing our state \$40 million next year alone.

Public dollars belong in public schools, which is the bottom line of my opposition to this bill. Public school systems are already struggling, so we should be investing any additional available money in our public schools. Private schools are just not held to the same transparency, accountability, or accessibility standards as our public schools; private schools don't have to take **all** students. Public funds should remain in public schools, where they serve all students, regardless of ability, background, or financial status. Vouchers take critical funding away from our public school system. Vouchers only benefit those in metro areas across our state as most rural communities do **not** have non-public schools. Why should rural North Dakotans foot the bill to send city kids to private schools, which is just what this bill does to rural North Dakotans.

I am asking you to oppose HB 1540. Don't use our public dollars on vouchers or educational savings accounts because that is not what North Dakota needs or wants.