

House Bill 1540
Senate Education Committee - Sen. Todd Beard, Chair
March 17, 2025 -- Testimony in Opposition to HB 1540

Chairman Beard and Members of the Senate Education Committee, I am Vicki Voldal Rosenau, a parent and resident of Valley City, ND. Thank you for this opportunity to offer my testimony in opposition to House Bill 1540.

I oppose HB 1540 because it is part of a serious attack on our North Dakota public schools. Promoters of school privatization are pushing for an extremely radical change to our state's entire educational system. Radical because the unpopular scheme to divert many millions of public tax dollars into private and homeschool operations would undermine public schools—and the small and rural communities that depend on them.

HB 1540, by forcing all taxpayers to fund private schooling entities, would drain limited public resources. What's worse, it would drastically damage North Dakota's small-town way-of-life, and likely force the closure of small public schools that currently serve as the hearts of our communities, both economically and socially.

Sadly, some promoters of this and the other privatization bills are spreading lies about our public schools. Let's set the record straight with two key, documented facts:

1. FACT: North Dakota's public schools rank among the best in the nation, with strong academic performance and national recognition. [<https://www.nd.gov/dpi/news/national-exam-nd-students-show-strength-math> , <https://www.kxnet.com/news/state-news/north-dakota-ranks-high-for-k-12-education/> and <https://insights.nd.gov/Education/State/StateAssessment/StudentAchievement>]

2. FACT: We do NOT need to publicly fund private entities in order to offer all students ample learning-pathway choices, because our public schools already offer a wide range of innovative education-choice options. Moreover, our public-schools network has the capacity to efficiently expand new opportunities as needed, without diverting any funds to private or charter facilities.

Lawmakers who are still pushing HB 1540 are ignoring the clear will of North Dakotans; they know that at least 68% oppose this misuse of huge amounts of taxpayer dollars. (Voters do realize that allowing state funds to be diverted to private schools would just be letting the camel's nose under the tent.)

At this point, it feels as if we North Dakotans are threatened with having a big chunk of our tax dollars and a critical piece of our lifestyle taken from us against our will. That would be flat-out wrong.

Chairman Beard and Committee, please recommend "Do Not Pass" on HB 1540.

Thank you for your consideration,
Vicki Voldal Rosenau, Valley City