

Dear Senate Education Committee,

My name is Katie Howard. I am a teacher in Devils Lake, ND and will have a child entering the public school system this fall. I am writing to express my concerns about HB 1540 and to advocate for the continued support of public schools in our state.

Our public schools serve all students, regardless of their background, ability, or socioeconomic status. Giving taxpayer dollars to private schools— which are not held to the same accountability and transparency standards as public schools— undermines the very foundation of our education system. Voucher systems like HB 1540 prioritize those who can already afford private education, leaving our most vulnerable students behind. I believe families should have a choice to send their children to a private institution, but taxpayers should not foot the bill for that choice.

Additionally, this bill would harm our rural communities where private school options are unavailable. Putting public funds toward private institutions weakens the resources that public schools depend on. Rather than implementing a voucher program that benefits a select few, we should focus on fully funding public education, where over 90% of North Dakota students are educated. I urge you to oppose HB 1540 and instead advocate for policies that strengthen public schools for all students.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your dedication to the future of education in our state.

Sincerely,

Katie Howard