

3/17/2025

Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I write to you today in favor of HB 1540. My family and I recently moved with our children from Wisconsin to attend Grace Lutheran School in Fargo and participate in the work of the Red River Lutheran School Association.

While living in Wisconsin four of our children were able to attend Private School as part of that state's school of choice program. This would have been financially impossible for us had the choice program not existed.

When coming here, it was rather strange to hear the political dialogue surrounding school of choice in North Dakota. In a place that trumpets family-friendly values, the opposition to this legislation is disheartening.

I desire to help working-class families have the opportunity to make a choice to send their children to private or public schools. This funding bill would enable many families to consider this as a viable option for their educational needs. Furthermore, allow me to suggest that healthy competition helps improve all our systems. A diversity of options is something to embrace, not fear.

This is not a matter of a religious education versus a public one. At Grace Lutheran School, we fulfill all the requirements of our accreditation and fulfill our obligations according to the North Dakota State Constitution.

We train our children to be civically engaged, academically rigorous, culturally aware, and frankly, lovers of our city/state/country. We find that the religious dimension of our curriculum simply supports that work. Martin Luther's Table of Duties, for example, was composed as an educational tool to guide pupils toward being good neighbors, honest workers, decent employers, devoted friends, and the like.

Upon fulfilling their education, we have seen how students from our School become responsible citizens who live and work for the public good.

Please help us continue this important task. Vote yes to HB 1540.

Rev. Scott Johnson
Parent and School Board Member
Grace Lutheran School of Fargo
Red River Lutheran School Association.

Associate Pastor
Immanuel Lutheran Church of Fargo