

Vote No: HB 1540

I am sharing my testimony to express my strong opposition to all forms of voucher bills - education savings accounts, scholarships, tax credits. Funneling public money into private schools is not what North Dakota families need. Keep public dollars in public schools. Voucher schemes support private schools in large ND communities. Rural Communities would be helping foot the bill for these wealthy private schools when only 32% of ND counties have access to private schools. I do not want my tax dollars funding private already wealthy schools or homeschools.

Voucher bills do not give North Dakota families any more school choice. Parents can choose which school is best for their kids. They can choose to homeschool, they can choose the closest public school, they can open-enroll their student to a nearby public school, or they can choose a private school. School choice is already available.

Public schools that receive state money follow the state's laws and rules. Private schools do not. They can refuse to admit students especially higher needs and higher cost students. The legislature is constitution-bound to provide a public education to North Dakota students. Support our public schools that are already doing great work with tight budgets.

I am a parent and school librarian in a public school. I am proud of the education my son is receiving, but I know that my district is struggling financially. Instead of diverting money to private already wealthy schools, give more to our state public schools, so they can continue to improve.

Sincerely,

Sarah E. Lerud