

March 17, 2025

Chairman Beard, members of the Senate Education Committee and all Senators:

My name is Michele Grenier and I am a proud parent of publicly educated children in rural North Dakota. My youngest is a sophomore at Rolette Public School, a small, but wonderful K-12 school in this state.

I am writing this letter to you opposing HB 1540 for the following reasons:

1. Vouchers take money away from public schools, reducing funding for public schools, available to all, for resources, teachers and programs.
2. Radicalism and funding shifts undermine public schools. 90% of the state's students attend public schools. The money should go to public schools.
3. Most private schools in North Dakota are religiously affiliated, and voucher programs would violate the separation of church and state by providing public tax dollars to religious institutions. If this passes, churches should be taxed also.
4. Voucher programs will lead to discrimination against students with disabilities or those who don't fit the "criteria" of the religious institution.
5. Private schools are not held accountable. Law makers, state agencies and the public, who are providing those tax dollars will have no way to ensure that the funds are used effectively and are getting a quality education. No one will have any proof of student achievement without oversight.
6. Parents who send their students to private schools know what they are getting themselves into financially. They make that decision freely. They have other options that would save them those dollars. Obviously, they can afford it if they continue to select a private school.
7. If the state is worried about how schools would have used state dollars when it comes to free hot lunch, they should be incredibly worried about how private schools and homeschool parents will use dollars they do not have to account for in any way.

I implore you to vote "NO" on HB 1540 for the sake of public education in North Dakota, to uphold the ideal of separation of church and state, and to keep public tax dollars in public schools.

Thank you,
Michele Grenier
Rolette, ND