

17 March 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in opposition to Bill HB 1540. Right now North Dakota public schools find themselves underfunded. Currently in Jamestown we are finding ourselves in the midst of public schooling chaos as one of our schools is closed down and another (Lincoln Elementary) is in dire need of a new building. It is not the time to redirect these desperately needed funds elsewhere. Setting up schooling accounts would allow for public funds to go to private education. These schools are not regulated and are not required to provide services or education to all students, especially students with special needs. As a mother of two special needs children this is very alarming. Public schools already struggle to accommodate the children they have on hand. There is a shortage of para-professionals, supplies for classrooms (meaning teachers must purchase their own), special needs provisions, etc. This doesn't even mention the fact that children go hungry in our schools every day. Appropriate use of public funds is for public education. We need properly funded public education first and foremost. And then we need free school meals for all. The idea of funds that could be allocated and go outside of public schools would mean even further lack of funding and resources for the schools of North Dakota.

Also, the use of public funds to fund private education that is likely religious would breakdown separation of church and state. This is a value held dear to our country and is a line that should not be crossed. People should have choice in their children's education, but that should not come at the cost of our public education system and this bill would come at that cost.

Thank you for your time and I ask that you vote no to this bill.

Sincerely,

Madison Lyonhart  
[madisonlyonhart@gmail.com](mailto:madisonlyonhart@gmail.com)  
2007 4th St NE  
Jamestown, ND 58401