

My name is Darrel Lund and I'm a retired teacher after 42 years all in West Fargo. I taught fourth graders for 20 years and then Kindergarten through sixth graders reading as a Title I teacher for 22 years. I am opposed to SB 2400 and urge you to vote **do not pass** on the ESA/Voucher bill before this committee.

I am asking you to oppose this bill for the following reasons.

No matter what these bills are called—education savings accounts, scholarship programs, or otherwise—if they divert public dollars to private schools, they are vouchers. North Dakotans have consistently opposed voucher programs.

- Public funds should remain in public schools, where they serve all students, regardless of ability, background, or financial status.
- Vouchers take funding away from our public school system while the state faces economic uncertainty with falling oil prices and tariffs on our farm exports in retaliation for United States imposed tariffs on other nations.
- Vouchers only benefit those in larger population areas across our state as most rural communities do not have private schools. Rural North Dakotans will foot the bill to send city kids to private schools.
- Public school systems are already struggling. Rather than lowering the increased funding from three percent to two percent per year in the next biennium, we should be increasing our investment to at least five percent per year in the next biennium without diverting tax dollars to nonpublic schools.

- Public dollars would not give more choices to students, it would only siphon needed dollars away from public schools.
- Private schools are not held to the same requirements for accepting students as public schools. All parents have a right to send their children to a private school.
- I support certain private schools that I choose to donate money to. I don't expect other taxpayers to support the same private schools as I do. They may not agree with the beliefs of those schools. Private school attendance is not necessarily a matter of affordability. Catholic schools urge parents to consider their schools whether they can afford the tuition or not. They offer different options for financial assistance **if** the student is accepted after applying.

I believe along with a majority of North Dakotans that public dollars belong in public schools. If you don't believe me, ask your constituents at an open public meeting in your district, if they favor public dollars going to private schools?

We should not subsidize private schools any more than allowing public money to be used for membership to a private golf club. Please vote "Do not pass" to SB 2400.

Thank you.

Darrel Lund