

Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Kelsey Mertens, and I am from Devils Lake, North Dakota. I am writing today to express my opposition to House Bill 1540, which aims to establish an education savings account program in our state.

While I understand that some families choose to enroll their children in private schools, it is crucial that we preserve and support our public education system. Public schools serve the majority of North Dakota's children, with approximately 118,513 students and 9,581 teachers across 511 schools. In contrast, private schools serve about 13,690 students with 990 teachers across 50 schools.

Diverting public funds to private education services, as proposed in HB 1540, could significantly reduce the resources available for public schools. This may lead to larger class sizes, reduced programs, and diminished support services for students. Additionally, private education providers may not be held to the same standards of accountability and transparency as public schools, potentially resulting in inconsistent educational quality and misuse of public funds.

Public education is essential for fostering social cohesion, providing equal opportunities, and preparing students to be active and informed citizens. By investing in our public schools, we ensure that every child has access to quality education, regardless of their background.

I urge you to oppose HB 1540 and to support initiatives that strengthen and invest in our public education system. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Mertens