

My name is Amy Hirsch and I have children at Grace Lutheran School in Fargo. Grace has been in the community since 1948 and part of our family for the last 13 years.

My children have almost aged out of Grace Lutheran School, and my family does not stand to gain from the passage of this bill. But because I believe this is good for the communities in our state and for the quality of the young people who will live and work here in years to come, I am writing today to urge support for HB1540's establishment of an educational savings account program to fund qualified student expenses at nonpublic schools.

Nonpublic education is on the rise around the nation, and Fargo is no exception. Since 2020, Grace Lutheran School has experienced an almost 200% increase in enrollment.

All families choosing nonpublic schools in North Dakota pay for two children to attend school: their own and someone else's, which is a sacrifice we make in order for our children to have the best possible education. My oldest child has aged out of Grace Lutheran School and now attends a wonderful Fargo Public high school where she is thriving because she was supported in her faith, academics, her social and emotional skills, and her character at Grace Lutheran School.

Grace Lutheran School is accredited by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and National Lutheran School Accreditation and has an excellent working relationship with Fargo Public Schools. This is not about church and state. This is about public and nonpublic schools working together to make our communities the best they can be by offering families a choice in the ideal environment for their students to grow and thrive.

Thank you for your service in the North Dakota Legislature. Please vote yes on HB 1540.

Sincerely,

Amy Hirsch  
Fargo, ND