

Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Kimberly Hurst and I reside in District 1. I am asking that you please render a do pass on Senate Bill 2104.

A strong and sound framework for public instruction is paramount for academic achievement; and state laws are the vital component of that framework. It should go without saying that state laws are critical for ensuring our education system operates effectively, fairly and in uniform. Without establishing compliance of these laws it weakens the quality of education our students receive. Compliance reinforces accountability and transparency to the public, educators and students; which also fosters trust with our education system.

Two years ago I removed my children from North Dakota public instruction. There are a number of reasons why, one of which are the provisions of this bill, or the lack thereof. When my children were enrolled in public school I had experienced numerous times how ineffective the complaint process is. At no point was my voice heard, nor was there resolution to any of my complaints. This made it challenging to navigate my involvement with my children's education. I was given instructions to follow a 'chain of command' policy, this process would initiate a dodge and deflect response with every chain link I climbed. Multiple times I have called [ND] DPI to speak to higher leadership, but these attempts also resulted in no

resolution. I quickly discovered there is a serious lack of accountability in our education system, which left me no choice but to remove my children and begin homeschool education. To some, I may be just one person with a bad experience but I would like to take a moment to share some facts with you. According to the data DPI provides to the public there are a total of 5,009 students who are currently homeschooling in North Dakota, this is a 28.8% increase from the 2022-2023 school year. There has been consistent growth in the homeschool community for the last three years in the entire state of North Dakota. In my local school district alone, Williston Basin School District#7, there has been a 129.9% growth in homeschool students from 2021-2025, resulting in a current total of 545 homeschool children. In the last two years of becoming a member in the homeschool community and forming relationships with other homeschool families, there seems to be a pattern for the reasons more families are choosing homeschooling over public education; many of these reasons are again, in relation to the provisions of this bill. The current education laws provide no support for parents or the public to file a formal complaint prompting a bona fide investigation into the complaint. The foundation of compliance with any law written would be powerless and ineffective without consequence, therefore the financial accountability attached to this bill delivers a solid foundation of adherence to the laws. In contrast to any argument against the financial component of this bill, I would like to bring attention that it will not be of any

concern as long as the school districts obey the laws of North Dakota. Looking at the homeschool data, it is irrefutable and it distinctly shows there is a drastic need for change in the North Dakota public education system. This change starts with accountability and accountability cannot happen without compliance with consequence.

I am a strong advocate for this bill because it implements effective obedience to the education laws of North Dakota that will fundamentally strengthen our framework for academic excellence. I urge you to support the passing of Senate Bill 2104. Thank you for your consideration on this important matter and for your service to the state of North Dakota. I stand for questions.

Kimberly Hurst