

Senate Bill 2241
Senate Education Committee
Sen. Todd Beard, Chair
February 2-3, 2025
Testimony in Opposition to SB 2241

Chairman Beard and Members of the Senate Education Committee, I am Vicki Voldal Rosenau, a patriot, a parent and a lifelong resident of Valley City, ND. Thank you for this opportunity to respectfully offer my testimony in strong opposition to Senate Bill 2241.

SB 2241 seeks to authorize a number of public charter schools in North Dakota, and it comes with a fiscal note stating that “The fiscal impact ... cannot be determined.” However, under “Funding,” starting with Line 20 on page 12, the bill specifies that, for each student enrolled in a charter school, “The state shall pay to the public charter school the per-pupil state aid payment...”

This diverting of taxpayer funds from traditional public schools to unproven, experimental charter schools forms the primary basis for my opposing this bill. Along with a storm of other dangerous, controversial proposals for diverting public money to private entities, the authorization of public charter schools would gravely jeopardize the excellence --and even the survival-- of our North Dakota public schools.

Our traditional public schools, which unmistakably need major funding increases instead of decreases, comprise the economic and social life-blood of communities across the state and, in fact, of our freedom-loving North Dakota way of life. Whatever worthwhile educational opportunities that charter schools might offer can more-efficiently be provided through our existing public schools -- as long as we provide the necessary resources. It makes no sense to spend many millions of dollars to create a redundant, unneeded system of parallel schools—including new bricks-and-mortar buildings.

The claim that North Dakota can appropriate taxpayers’ dollars for charter schools without defunding our cash-strapped public schools is flatly dishonest. Allocating our finite tax dollars is a “zero-sum game,” because taxpayers cannot and will not go along with paying ever-increasing taxes. Tax-dollar allocations for public schools would inevitably be lessened if any tax dollars were diverted to charter schools.

I urge you, as leaders serving the public on this Education Committee of statewide scope, to vote “Do Not Pass” on SB 2241. Instead, please focus your important efforts on providing our existing public schools with all the resources they need to attract talented innovators in order to strengthen and modernize the education they are universally providing to all of our precious children.

Thank you very much for your consideration,
Vicki Voldal Rosenau, Valley City