

Testimony SB 2241

February 3, 2025
Senate Education Committee
SB 2241

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Russ Hanson, and I am with the Associated General Contractors of North Dakota (AGC of ND). The AGC of ND is the largest construction trade association in North Dakota who perform all types of commercial construction (highway/bridge, vertical commercial, water/utility). Our membership also consists of equipment and material suppliers and has been in existence since 1951.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide input into consideration of the possibility of adding public charter schools to the offerings available to most other states and for our Legislature having the dialogue of whether to do so in the 2025 Legislature.

As a trade association of a business orientated organization, I am far from being well versed in the important education policy. The thing I know most about education is the members I represent build and repair the buildings and infrastructure that safely transport the students and educators to places they convene to teach and learn.

The other aspect I am aware of is the AGC members both in North Dakota and throughout the nation employ a lot of trade and craft professionals. With the curriculum flexibility I understand Charter Schools provide, perhaps adding them in North Dakota could assist in getting students started in pursuing a trade sooner than a traditional school can?

Several years ago, I did have an opportunity to spend an entire day at a St. Louis Charter school and it was a fulfilling day. To see the joy and satisfaction in the students in that school doing the tasks of that respective school is a memory that hasn't left me – many in construction related curriculum. Many were students from families that did not have resources many of us are fortunate to have and their school was a place they looked forward to going to each day. Also, composed of students who didn't do well in the traditional school setting. It seemed to be a place where they appreciated the opportunity to learn in a way that seemed to be better for their situation.

Thanks to the prime sponsor and co-sponsors for bringing SB 2241 to the 2025 Legislative Assembly to discuss whether this avenue is appropriate to advance to our offerings to assist in widening the educational opportunities and possibly offering an additional avenue to provide workforce assistance.

I appreciate the opportunity to present this testimony and request Thank you for allowing me to present this testimony and I will attempt to address any questions I may be capable of answering.