

Good morning, Chairman Beard, Vice Chair Lemm, and Committee Members.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of SB 2295. My name is Kimberly Efta, and I am a resident of District 42 in Grand Forks (zip code 58203). I am a full-time real estate agent, and my husband, Deven, is a farmer. We are grateful to call North Dakota home and are raising our three children, ages 9, 8, and 6, here.

Both my husband and I were educated in public schools and had wonderful experiences. In fact, my family has long supported school choice. When I was in second grade at Unity Elementary in Petersburg, my parents fought for open enrollment in North Dakota. To ensure my older sisters could participate in extracurricular activities, they made the difficult decision to move our family more than 20 miles to Larimore. They traveled to Bismarck 19 times during the 1993 legislative session to advocate for open enrollment, and their concern for our education left a lasting impression on me.

Today, we are still debating whether parents should have the right to choose the best school for their children. As a parent, I find it deeply concerning that public school district boundaries dictate where my child must attend school based solely on our home address. The recent Grand Forks Public Schools boundary map changes will force some children to switch schools, regardless of what may be best for their individual needs or proximity to their current school.

As a real estate agent, I have already received calls from homeowners who feel they have no choice but to sell their homes and move—simply to keep their children in their current school. This is a costly and unnecessary burden that could be avoided with expanded school choice policies.

There are also clear disparities between schools in Grand Forks. The highest-performing elementary schools are concentrated in wealthier neighborhoods, particularly in the Kelly Elementary, Discovery Elementary and Century Elementary boundaries, where the average sold home price in the past year was \$494,272. Meanwhile, in the N Grand Forks neighborhoods in the 58203 zip code, the average sold home price is \$226,693, and our assigned elementary school ranks 8th out of 11 in the district. Families should not have to purchase a half-million-dollar home just to ensure their children receive a top-quality education.

This creates an inequitable system where the wealthiest families have access to the best schools while lower-income families are left with fewer options. No parent should be forced to uproot their family due to a school district's redrawn boundaries.

I urge you to support SB 2295 and expand school choice in North Dakota, ensuring that all families—**regardless of income or address**—have access to the best possible education for their children.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kimberly Efta, District 42 Resident, Grand Forks, ND