



1 **Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill No. 2295**

2 Chairperson and Members of the Committee - Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I
3 am here representing NDCEL and your school administrators as I strongly oppose Senate Bill
4 No. 2295 due to its constitutional, financial, and policy implications. While supporting
5 educational opportunities for all students is commendable, this bill undermines public education
6 and imposes an unsustainable financial burden on taxpayers.

7 **Unconstitutional Use of Public Funds**

8 This bill violates the North Dakota Constitution, which explicitly prohibits public funds from
9 being appropriated to private or sectarian schools (Article VIII, Sections 1 and 5). The state has a
10 constitutional obligation to provide a system of free public education, and redirecting state aid to
11 private institutions undermines that responsibility. Public funds should remain dedicated to
12 strengthening our public school system, which serves all students regardless of background or
13 financial status.

14 **Diverting Public Funds Without Accountability**

15 Public schools are held to rigorous accountability measures, including open records laws,
16 standardized testing, and non-discrimination policies—requirements that private schools do not
17 have to meet. This bill allows public dollars to flow into private institutions without the same
18 level of transparency or oversight, leaving taxpayers without assurances that funds are being
19 used equitably and effectively.

20 **Equity Concerns and Impact on Rural Schools**

21 This bill disproportionately benefits families who can already afford private school tuition while
22 offering little to students in rural areas, where private school options are scarce or nonexistent.
23 Meanwhile, public schools across the state—particularly in small and rural communities—stand
24 to lose essential funding, deepening educational disparities and limiting opportunities for
25 students who rely on public education.

26 **\$2.1 Billion Cost Burden**

27 The bill’s staggering \$2.1 billion price tag poses a severe risk to the state’s budget. Without a
28 clear funding source, taxpayers would likely face increased financial burdens, either through
29 higher property taxes or cuts to other essential state services. At a time when public schools need



1 additional support for teacher salaries, classroom resources, and infrastructure improvements,
2 redirecting state funds to private education is fiscally irresponsible and shortsighted.

3 **Conclusion**

4 Public education is a cornerstone of our society, and state resources should be used to strengthen,
5 not undermine, it. Senate Bill No. 2295 violates the constitution, reduces transparency,
6 exacerbates inequities, and places an unsustainable financial burden on North Dakota taxpayers.
7 For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to reject this bill.

8 Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions the committee may have.

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