

Dear Legislators,

I am adamantly opposed to all the school choice bills introduced into the house and senate.

Let me start by saying my kids all went to Catholic Schools, fourth generation. However, like the rest of the community, everybody has the choice right now to send their kids to the school of their choice within their district, and neighborhood. We did. I disagree with sending our kids to catholic school as a "SACRIFICE." We all did this willingly. Nobody made me sacrifice or give my jewelry for the war effort etc. If we did not want to send our kids to a non-public school, we would not have. Introducing funding for school choice will not increase enrollment nor sway more to go to these schools. We thought at the time it was the best choice. In the end, it was not and our kids suffered consequences due to the closed, limited, and strangulated academic environment non-public schools offer.

Let's keep one fact in mind. Just because you have a small population in or want this choice, does not mean you burden the entire population with a tax burden that offers a solution to a problem that does not exist. Public schools are excellent places for our kids to learn, have many resources to aid the ones that need help and offer lots of courses, a breadth of technical and skilled opportunities and extra-curricular activities.

Here are a few points why I am against the bill. Kids that need IEP's don't get that at non-public schools, they get pushed out of the system and forced into public schools. So honestly, this is not the best learning environment for our children in this community. Also, our kids miss out on good sports facilities, shop class or other curriculum that the non-public schools don't offer that is offered in public schools. AP courses are not fully offered at the JPll schools in the breadth that public schools get them. So, I respectfully disagree with any statement or making a statement to others, that non-public schools are the best learning environment. Ask me how I know. I went to public school, a small Christian school with 8 students in my class and a large Catholic high school growing up. I know the differences and cultures of them all.

I already appreciated having the choice, I did not "need" it and if I did, it was freely, freely, let me say that again, freely available for my choice.

Non-public schools do not build a great culture, unless you want a focused, one track hostile to non-loyalist environment that you expose your children. Our kids experience has turned them away from their faith. Out of the multiple siblings, my spouse is the only one to send kids to a non public school. Others I have talked to who went to non-public schools growing up did not send their kids there. There is a reason the church is fighting so hard to get this, they think it will bring more into the fold. It won't.

On several occasions, all my kids have experienced a negative culture for one reason or another. Let me give you one example of when a fellow student took a picture of my daughter's crotch. The school did nothing. My daughter lives with that "culture" in her

memory. I am also hearing this from other parents on how their kids are being treated and the school is not working to resolve these "cultural" issues. I even heard recently that kids were doing the Hitler salute and joking about it, far too frequently. As a child of a parent that was raised in Nazi occupied Europe, I find this disturbing. This is not a culture I would expect in a Christian school. The cultures these non-public schools are building is not one that brings a community together, but is rather ripping it apart.

Let me speak to the Executive order. No, I don't want my taxes to be diverted from CCDGB or my military funds paying for school choice when I want them to defend my borders or our NATO partners. House Bill 1670 will cost the state up to 3.8 million dollars initially. I don't agree with that. Let's pay for school lunches and breakfasts first. House Bill 1590 lays out another expense to all taxpayers in this state, to match up to 50% of a contribution (full allowable contribution to be \$2000) per year. HB 1540 looks to add another 1/4 million dollars to the bill. Home school and non-public schools, again those that have chosen it, have that choice freely and I don't want to pay for it on top of supporting public schools.

SB 2295 seems to add another multiplier to my local tax bill for the kids that go to non-public schools...? So, now the formula for my taxes increases even more at the local level too. Why, to pay for the non-public school enrollees. I understand the school district is required to forward that to the schools, but I don't want to pay for a faith-based school system with my taxes. I don't expect my non-faith-based neighbors to pay for my kids faith-based education. This is not right. SB 2303 is just the same as the house bill and I disagree with it as well.

Here is what I would support. Take money out of the mills for public schools and put them into programs that can show they meet or exceed the standards, curriculum offerings and provide a loving and accepting culture to all children, IEP kids, to kids struggling at home e.g. provide counselling services like the public schools have. Secondly, all the funds the non-public schools bring in, should be shared back to the public schools. And if my non-public school choice now gets dollars received through taxation, they should meet all grant stipulations that are required under all state and or federal grants. But moreover, if non-public schools get dollars received from my tax dollars, all non-public schools receiving them should then be taxed on their revenues and lose their tax-exempt status.

In summary, I am opposed to these bills. These proposed bills bring more burden to all residents in this state in the form of more taxes, wasteful spending and a solution to a problem that does not exist.

Sincerely,

Pierre Freeman
2823 36th Ave S
Fargo Nd 58104