

Testimony in Opposition to SB2303

Submitted by Sandy Hansen, resident of Barnes County, ND

I would like to encourage the committee to give this bill a "Do Not Pass" recommendation. More studies need to be done to determine the effect on the state's budgeting for education and how this could benefit some to the detriment of others.

Studies in states that have invested in these private school funds show that the programs year did not always roll out in predictable ways: certain programs have proven more expensive than anticipated, drawing down state coffers if not state education budgets directly. The primary beneficiaries have of some programs have been affluent families with students already enrolled in private schools. Princeton University researchers have found evidence of Iowa private and parochial schools raising tuition to take advantage of state subsidies, which may make it harder for lower-income families to participate in the programs. It's not possible to know how much students are learning under some of the programs - it's likely to present state policymakers with difficult decisions about the size and shape of the new choice plans - given their emerging impact on state budgets, public school funding and enrollments, longstanding efforts to strengthen educational opportunities for low-income students, and even the sustainability of public charter schools.

(Information from "First Results from the New Wave of Public Funding of Private Schooling," www.future-ed.org)

We are a rural state with limited funds available for our public schools. Re-routing public tax dollars needed for those unable to afford private education to non-public education seems a misuse of those funds without further investigation of consequences. Our public dollars would be better used on supporting our public schools and their staff.

PLEASE VOTE NO ON SB2303. Thank you.