

Toni Mocko, Minot, ND
Re: Senate Bill 2303
Senate Education Committee
February 4th, 2025

Chairman Beard and members of the Education Committee,

Thank you for listening to my testimony in favor of Senate Bill 2303.

All parents, regardless of their financial situation, should have the opportunity to choose where to send their children to school. If they feel a government-funded school is not the right fit for their children, they should be able to benefit in a similar way that government-funded school families do.

Ten years ago, we chose Bishop Ryan Catholic School because we did not like the direction in which we saw government-funded schools heading. A direction which consisted of ideologies that did not align with our family's values and beliefs. For example, we did not like seeing the trend of God being removed from schools. When God and Faith are removed, that is essentially inviting in the opposite of God. This was not negotiable for us. We also liked the opportunity to continue living in our home in Minot and still have our kids in smaller class sizes with K-12 under one roof, without having to sell our home and move to a smaller community.

Ten years later, even though we have paid a substantial amount of money in tuition, we do not have a single regret about that decision. However, it is not right that we do not benefit from government funds allocated for education just because we want our children in a school that aligns with our values and beliefs. We are all tax-paying citizens and should have equal opportunities to benefit from those funds regardless of the school we want our children to be educated in.

My children have been able to cope through their rough times and obstacles they face, by turning to God in prayer. This is reinforced through their education at Bishop Ryan Catholic School. If more families could have this opportunity, I feel it can significantly improve the mental well-being for everyone in our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration in supporting Senate Bill 2303.