



1 **Testimony in Support with request for AMENDMENT to Senate Bill 2330**

2 Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

3 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. We agree this is very important – however we are  
4 asking that there be a consideration of this training occurring in another venue. We are here to  
5 ask that you please not put another requirement on our public schools. While the prevention of  
6 human trafficking is undoubtedly a critical issue, this bill **misplaces the burden of education on**  
7 **an already overextended public school system** instead of leveraging institutions better suited  
8 for such education. Please don't misrepresent this as opposition to the notion that our children  
9 need to know – we just believe that perhaps the delivery mechanism would be better placed in a  
10 different venue.

11 **Public Schools Are Already Overburdened with Mandates**

12 North Dakota's public schools are tasked with fulfilling a **long and exhaustive list of state and**  
13 **federal requirements**, covering academic standards, special education services, safety  
14 protocols, mental health and suicide prevention programs, bullying prevention and policing,  
15 extensive professional development and reporting mandates and various other student support  
16 initiatives. Each year, additional mandates are added to their plate, stretching resources thin and  
17 pulling educators away from their primary focus: **academic excellence and student success**. To  
18 be honest – we are asked constantly about test scores in math and reading and yet each session  
19 I've been here in representation of K12 since 2013 there have been at least 3-4 new mandates on  
20 schools unrelated to those topics.

21 Rather than introducing **yet another requirement** that diverts time and funding from core  
22 educational priorities, a more effective approach would be to **place this education where it**  
23 **belongs—in churches, at the family level, community organizations, and law enforcement**  
24 **outreach programs**, which are better equipped to provide in-depth, specialized training on  
25 sensitive social issues. As an incredibly important yet sensitive topic the level of early  
26 communication and opportunity for opt out would be significant.

27 **The Role of Churches and Community Organizations**

28 Faith-based institutions and community organizations have long played an integral role in  
29 addressing **moral and societal concerns**, including issues of human trafficking and exploitation.  
30 Many churches already conduct **outreach programs**, engage in **victim support efforts**, and  
31 collaborate with law enforcement to **raise awareness in their congregations**. These settings  
32 offer **trusted, values-based education** that can be **more impactful** than a mandatory school  
33 training session.

34 Additionally, requiring educators—who are not subject-matter experts on human trafficking—to  
35 deliver this training is neither **practical nor effective**. The solution should lie in **partnerships**



1 **with organizations that specialize in prevention efforts**, rather than making this another  
2 checkbox in the already overburdened school system.

3 The **\$48,000 appropriation** attached to this bill is an insufficient amount to properly implement  
4 such an extensive program, meaning that much of the cost burden will fall on local school  
5 districts. And I have to ask – what about non-public schools and home school children? All the  
6 more reason for the shift – those students would not be missed.

### 7 **Accountability and Implementation Concerns**

8 The bill mandates that schools report:

- 9 • **A summary of incidents reported as a result of the training**
- 10 • **Feedback on program effectiveness**
- 11 • **The number of students and faculty who received training**

12 This raises serious **privacy and legal concerns** regarding the reporting of sensitive information.  
13 Additionally, there is **no clear metric** for how effectiveness will be measured, nor is there a  
14 defined enforcement mechanism for ensuring compliance.

### 15 **Conclusion**

16 Human trafficking prevention is a serious issue that deserves attention, but **public schools**  
17 **should not be the primary vehicle for this training**. This bill would add **yet another**  
18 **bureaucratic requirement** to an already overwhelmed education system, stretching resources  
19 that should be dedicated to academic success. Instead, the state should **empower churches,**  
20 **community organizations, and law enforcement agencies, and parents to lead these efforts**  
21 in collaboration with families. We've seen so many bills stating that the parents are the lead in  
22 the child's life and their overall leader in their child's education - perhaps a thoughtful bill about  
23 how communities and faith-based organizations can partner with the parent is the more  
24 appropriate approach.

25 For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to **please amend** Senate Bill 2330 and to  
26 explore alternative approaches to deliver this very important information to our children.

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