

February 12, 2025

Dear Chairman Beard and members of the Senate Education committee,

My name is Anita Tulp and I am the Director of the Valley City Barnes County Public Library. I am not writing to you today in my professional capacity but as a concerned citizen and Christian woman. I ask that you vote "Do Not Pass," on SB 2355.

As a Christian woman, I feel that I would not trust our public schools and a teacher that may or may not be a Christian to teach my children or grandchildren about intelligent design and creation. There are many different denominations of Christian churches and they each have their own doctrine that they follow according to their interpretation of scripture. Their rules of worship and beliefs may be different from church to church. I believe the teachings of Christian beliefs such as intelligent design and creation is my job as a parent and the job of my church. If my children were taught something in school that didn't agree with the teachings of their Sunday School class, then our stability as a worshipping Christian family would be undermined by the state required curriculum. That interference should not happen.

I also do not believe we have the right to force religion or religious beliefs on anyone. Our 1st Amendment guarantees that there will be "no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Therefore, it would be wrong to push our Christian beliefs on someone that may not believe at all or someone that is from another religion that doesn't recognize Jesus or other Christian beliefs.

I truly believe that we created by a loving God who sent his son Jesus to save us. I also believe that as Christians, we are called to be disciples of Jesus and share the love of God in His name. Jesus did not force his teachings on anyone. He offered them as a gift and an opportunity for everlasting life if we only have faith. Being a Christian is a deeply spiritual thing, and each Christian has their own personal relationship with Jesus. I don't believe that a curriculum about intelligent design can inspire the same kind of understanding about Christianity and why we believe in creation and expect the same results as from teachings received in their local church and from parents.

For those that would like to have Christian influence in their school curriculum, we have this wonderful thing called "private school" in which parents can choose to enroll their children. There are many options in private schools as well and parents can choose the one that fits best with their beliefs. They may also choose to homeschool and are then free to include the Christian curriculum they want.

What about the unchurched children you might ask? That is our job as disciples of Jesus. We are to share the stories of God's love and invite those we meet to join with us. Invite them to church, invite them to a meal, pray for them and with them when they are ready to accept Jesus as their Savior.

Please vote "Do Not Pass" on SB 2355. Thank you for your time.