

I am writing to urge you to oppose the six bills that would use public dollars to fund private schools. (HB 1540, HB 1590, HB 1607, SB 2295, SB 2303, SB 2400)

I am writing this in a unique position as someone who spent 8 years teaching in a private school before returning to public education last school year. I had a general opposition to vouchers before that, still had reservations during my employment in a private school, and after leaving fully opposed to any redirection of funds from public education to private systems.

I could give you any number of examples of things I saw that made me deepen my opposition. From a lack of diversity to the exclusion of student populations, lack of continuity of staff and so, so many other things I saw firsthand, this is not something I as a resident of North Dakota want my tax money going to. Students who wanted advanced placement classes still had to take those in the public school systems. I recall other instances in my time in the private systems hearing "we need to talk to Fargo public about that" for various funding and support aspects. We as a state are lucky enough to have strong academic systems in place. However, these systems require funding to remain so. Why divert funds to systems that still rely on the public school sector to operate?

The city of Fargo provides me with perfectly good sidewalks to run on. I want more, so I choose to purchase a gym membership. I don't expect anyone to pay for that membership. When I travel for another organization, they provide me a hotel room as long as I share with someone. I don't want to share a hotel room - so I pay for half. I made that choice. I expect no one to pay for my choice. In turn, I do not see the reasoning for my family, my children, my neighbors to pay for someone who is choosing resources beyond what is often provided in their own backyard. Are they welcome to their choice? Of course. Preferably not at the cost of my children's academic options and employment.