

1 SB2400– ESA Bill

2 Mandan Public Schools – Mike Bitz, Superintendent

3 Good morning, Chairman Beard and members of the Senate  
4 Education Committee. For the record, my name is Mike Bitz. I  
5 am fortunate to serve as the superintendent for Mandan Public  
6 Schools. Thank you for all you do to support education in ND. I  
7 am here today to oppose SB2400.

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9 Although the fiscal note for this bill has not yet been posted, I am  
10 estimating it will be well over \$200,000,000. These are public  
11 dollars appropriated by the legislature and there is no fiscal  
12 accountability. The schools receiving these funds are not required  
13 to account for how these funds will be spent - As a Conservative  
14 and a ND taxpayer, I will tell you that this is not only bad  
15 government, it is wrong. ND has great private schools, with good  
16 people working in them, but giving anyone \$200,000,000 without  
17 any fiscal accountability is a bad idea. If you approve this bill,  
18 please put guardrails in place to ensure full accountability for  
19 these dollars. The taxpayers of ND deserve this.

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21 ND has great private schools, and no one is arguing that parents  
22 should not be able to send their children to these great schools.  
23 However, I find it confusing that the legislature is also

1 considering a parent's right bill that in its current form will not  
2 apply to private schools even if they accept public dollars. If  
3 private schools accept public dollars (and these are public dollars  
4 as evidenced by the fiscal note attached to this bill), shouldn't we  
5 expect them to open their board meetings and welcome parents to  
6 attend, and have the ability to address the board? Should parents  
7 really need to forfeit their rights as parents if the private school  
8 chooses to admit their child? I think the overwhelming majority  
9 of ND residents can agree that **Accepting public dollars means**  
10 **accepting public accountability!**

11 Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I urge you  
12 to vote NO on HB2400. At a minimum if you are going to  
13 approve this bill, amend it and give taxpayers the fiscal  
14 accountability they deserve. I would be happy to stand for any  
15 questions.

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