

RE: SB 2400

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

As a longtime resident of North Dakota, I am concerned about the impact that SB 2400 will have on our public school system. I moved to North Dakota from Utah, where the public schools are crowded, class sizes are large, and while overall funding is high, per capita funding is low. I've *stayed* in North Dakota for the K-12 system that my four children have thrived in.

SB 2400 takes resources away from the public K-12 system and puts those resources into private schools that do not have the same requirements for equitable access and enrollment, accountability standards, or local governance.

SB 2400 fails to recognize the landscape of North Dakota and the lack of private educational options in rural areas. Rural communities and families in our state will receive absolutely no benefit from this bill as there are no private or parochial nonpublic schools located in the majority of North Dakota counties. In fact, only about a third of the state's residents have access to private schools.

This bill takes resources from the state's many public schools to support private choices including those that may not be accredited or even lead to a high school diploma. Private schools are also not required to have equitable enrollment policies and standards. State funds should not be used for these purposes. Furthermore, similar programs have produced significant funding deficits in other states. The bill is short-sighted in this regard and fiscally irresponsible.

I've also heard, in discussion with local school board members and teachers, that the bill presents a "double whammy" in the funding formula... public schools will lose dollars both in terms of the voucher (aka "education savings account") but also in per pupil funding.

I strongly urge you to vote "no" on SB 2400.

Thank you for your consideration,

Daphne Pedersen

Grand Forks, ND