

February 4th 2025

Senate Education Committee

Chairman Senator Beard, Respected Committee Members

I am submitting testimony in opposition to SB 2400, Educational Spending Accounts.

My name is Paula Moch. I am a lifelong North Dakota Resident. I grew up in Bismarck, attended Public Schools.

I appreciate the time you are taking to read this testimony, so I am going to try to be brief.

I feel that the people in the state of ND voted OVERWHELMINGLY against public funds to private institutions when they voted against Bartlett and Heitkamp as head of ND Department of Public Instruction. Current polls indicate that there is not support for public funds to private schools. As the people of ND want tax reform, they are not looking for ways to spend more funds.

I currently live in Rural North Dakota. I am an hour from Bismarck, the closest private school. I have friends who live 90 minutes to over two hours away from a private school. Attended private school is not an option for many rural residents.

Public Dollars belong in Public Schools.

The issue that I have with this ESA program, as outlined here is all the disparity. The “unfairness”, the inequality of this bill. Instead of a straight across the board EQUAL amount for each student, it varies. From \$4000 to private school students to \$1000 to home school students and public school students. Why the difference, why does a public school student get only \$1000 while a private school student can get up to \$4000?

If the goal is to provide educational relief to families, provide free school meals. This is equal for all, each kid gets the same benefit.

Lastly, I feel that this bill is a conflict of interest for many people, maybe some on this committee, as it will directly benefit them the most. If there are Legislators who have children in private schools, they have a conflict of interest and should excuse themselves from voting on the bill.

Thank you for your time

Paula Moch

