

Jan 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Chairman Owens and members of the House Education Committee

RE: House Bill 1369

Thank you for your time today to hear my thoughts regarding House Bill 1369.

My wife and I made a choice, after much debate, to enroll our children in private school back in 2013. Three of our four children currently attend private school; kindergarten, third and fifth grade, with our fourth set to attend in two years. I am an engineer and my wife is a part time nurse (she works night shifts solely to pay for our children's tuition). We are both lifelong residents of North Dakota, having graduated from local public high schools.

We are not wealthy, rather we're average "middle class" folks. We desire the best learning environment for our children. Our tuition bill is approximately \$20,000 annually. Overall, we will spend over \$400,000 on our children's primary education, before they go to college. This is a burden that the state does not have to bear. And one that I initially balked at, to great length, resulting in several arguments.

I believe parents have ultimate responsibility for their child's academic success and the burden should not fall solely on the state. It's understood that that reality is becoming less and less common, and we need to work to reverse that trend. Ultimately, if you want participation, most will give greater attention to an activity if their personal wealth is tied to it, and it need not be 100%. I believe the proposed amount with parents owning the remaining is an excellent way to engage the public, reduce overall school budgets and foster parental involvement. A win for both parties and our great State of North Dakota.

I believe public/private partnerships can unleash value for both parties. Many of our neighbors whose children attend public school express interest in private education, for various reasons. However, they see the tuition bill in addition to their property taxes and walk away from the freedom to choose. They call us crazy, and perhaps we are. Others we know choose home schooling, which helps keep the cost down versus onsite private education. If the tuition rates could be reduced significantly, as this bill supports, I'm confident many more people would sign up, and actually relieve some of the tuition burden from the state in the process.

I appreciate your support for House Bill 1369 and welcome any questions you may have for me.

Regards,

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