

Dear House Education Committee,

I am a parent in Fargo, North Dakota writing in support of House Bill 1523 which supports a parent's right to choose the best education for their children. There are many reasons school choice is beneficial for students, families, and our state, and I am sure you have heard about them. School choice saves taxpayer dollars because private schools educate students for much less than what is spent on public education. School choice encourages parents to be more involved in their child's education and allows lower income parents to choose what is best for their child — not just families that can afford to pay both the taxes and the tuition. Many more families will have access to choices in their child's education as a result of this bill. In addition, workforce is one of the biggest challenges currently facing North Dakota. A reimbursement program like this will help North Dakota attract workers and families to the state.

In regards to the bill's wording, it is not clear whether or not an out of state school is qualified. For example, parents in Fargo may choose to have their children attend a private school in Moorhead, MN such as Park Christian School. There are similar situations in Grand Forks & East Grand Forks. I would recommend that the "qualified school" definition be amended to include schools in neighboring states MN, SD, and MT or "30 miles from the border of ND" for example. I strongly encourage an amendment to ensure the bill is inclusive of schools just across the border in neighboring states that may be great options for families.

Often those who are against school choice are those who benefit from the status quo and no competition for public schools. More competition will mean administrators and teachers striving to provide the best education possible for all students. North Dakota lags behind many states in this area. Now is the time to step up and support freedom of education for ND families.

Sincerely,

Sasha Dykema
Fargo, ND