

To the ND House Education Committee,

I am writing in support of HB 1532. Any tuition reimbursement that could be made to our household would be appreciated.

My name is Kari Sornsin. I am a graduate of Fargo Shanley High School. My children all attended/attend the St. John Paul II Catholic Schools in Fargo. I have also been a teacher in the Fargo Catholic Schools for thirty years. My support for Catholic education runs deep. I also applaud the ND public schools for the quality education that they provide.

A few years ago, a ND House candidate stopped by my home on a neighborhood campaign swing. We discussed many topics, including a previous bill similar to the one currently being considered. I shared my support for this type of bill, and he shared that he opposed it. I went on to describe my situation ...

Teachers in the Catholic schools in Fargo make about 2/3 the salary of a public-school teacher. Currently, my salary is \$45,000. That is about \$20,000 less than I would make at Fargo Public Schools. JP II Schools have been wonderful in providing scholarship money when available, and my parents have helped with tuition costs over the years as well. My ex-husband and I wanted to pay our fair share, so we avoided asking for help as long as possible. This meant that our children did "without" in many situations over the years. Many in our community view private school families as wealthy or privileged. Most would be surprised to know of the many families more like mine.

I do not begrudge our ND public schools of general taxpayer support. They need to be funded. I would appreciate consideration, though, of even a portion of my contribution being reimbursed. School choice can only make all of our schools stronger, and this bill could help alleviate some of the financial roadblocks for families like mine.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kari Sornsin  
Fargo, ND