

Dear Senators,

I am writing in opposition to HB 1532. As a public school educator in North Dakota, I oppose HB 1532 for the following reasons:

Diverting public funds away from the public education system and toward private institutions will result in fewer resources, larger class sizes, and reduced opportunities for students at public schools. Additionally, private schools may have different admission criteria and may not be required to provide the same services or accommodations as public schools, which will lead to increased inequity in education. If students are incentivized to leave the public school system, it may become economically unfeasible to keep some public schools open, which could result in closures and further reduction of resources for remaining public schools.

North Dakota's rural communities, served by public schools, will receive absolutely no benefit from this bill as there are no private or parochial nonpublic schools located in 36 of North Dakota's 53 counties.

Additionally, HB 1532 requires no accountability for these expenditures on the part of the private schools who will receive them. In contrast, public schools, governed by locally elected school boards and open meetings laws, must account for every dime they receive from the taxpayers of North Dakota.

Finally, nonpublic schools that will benefit from HB 1532 are not required to follow many federal and state requirements and the bill specifically prohibits requiring nonpublic schools to alter their admissions policy. They are free to deny admission to any student for any reason, including cognitive ability, physical disability, as well as behavioral and social limitations. Public schools, on the other hand, proudly educate all comers, regardless of their limitations and abilities. It is not unreasonable to believe that if private, nonpublic schools receive state funding, then they should have to follow the same state and federal requirements as North Dakota's public schools.

Therefore, I urge you to VOTE NO on HB 1532. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Noah Brenden, School Counselor
Wahpeton Public School District