

To those serving on the Senate Appropriations Committee,

My name is Megan Petersen. I live in District 18, and I am a parent who has chosen to enroll my children in St. Michael's Catholic School. I support 1532 because it helps me to give my kids a better education than they would get in our local school district.

My husband and I are both public school-educated kids. My husband is the son of a public school teacher. We had an excellent experience in the public school setting. We decided on a non-public education for our kids because of the lack of resources we see in the public school setting while working in the public schools in our state and assessing the national scores of schools in our area. In my career as a social worker supporting youth in the foster care system, I was exposed to the public education system throughout the state. Our elementary school district, Wilder, seems overfull, underfunded and is constantly under threat of closure by the school board. Wilder's test scores demonstrate a 42% proficiency in Math and Reading according to the US News and World Report. The middle school in our district, Valley Middle School, is similarly on the chopping block. It's overfull, run down and the school board says it needs to be bulldozed and a new one built with funds they no longer have. Valley's test scores demonstrate a 34% proficiency in Math and Reading.

We chose to attend a non-public school to offer our children smaller class sizes, more resources and a better chance at education. We love their education! We love to see the moral education they receive. We love the academic rigor they are challenged with! Both of our children are testing between 92-99th percentile in Math and Reading in their national testing. The only downside is the cost.

We make sacrifices to make tuition work within our budget. With two more kids heading to school soon, it is with trepidation we have to consider whether we have to send some or all of our kids to a chaotic, underperforming school district. We want more for our kids and believe that other families shouldn't have to accept less than the best for their kids due to cost. A tuition reimbursement would let us comfortably afford our kids' education.

Please, I ask you to consider giving your full support to HB 1532 as it comes up for a vote.

Thank you for your service to the state of North Dakota and for your time on ND 1532.