

March 26, 2023

Written Testimony in Support of HB 1532

Dear Members of the North Dakota Senate Appropriations - Education and Environment Division,

As we have had a great experience with the private school system and because of its positive impact on our children, we are writing to express our full support for House Bill 1532—a measure we believe necessary to promote and enhance private education.

We live in District 5 and have five children, all of whom attend or have attended Bishop Ryan Catholic School in Minot, ND. Like many other parents, we, too, made a substantial financial commitment by sending our children to Catholic schools. Nevertheless, we were resolute in our decision and realized that Catholic schools are and will continue to be the optimal choice for our children's education and future.

The passing of House Bill 1532 can significantly impact the financial burden that parents face when choosing between public and private schools for their children. The bill's provisions can notably promote school choice and empower parents to select the most suitable educational options for their child's needs. Furthermore, it would grant parents access to a wider range of educational opportunities, especially those that align with their closely held religious beliefs.

The claim made by critics that House Bill 1532 weakens the effectiveness of the public school system, and reduces its funding, is entirely untrue. These faulty perceptions have been largely influenced by the arguments of its opponents and lobbyists of the public school system. In reality, House Bill 1532 acknowledges the crucial role played by *both* public and private schools in our State and does not deprive any resources of the former.

Moreover, it is entirely possible that House Bill 1532 will *enhance* the efficiency of the public school system. For example, the increased flexibility provided to parents by House Bill 1532 promotes healthy competition among schools, leading to improved educational opportunities and outcomes for all students in our local communities and throughout our entire State.

In order to guarantee that parents can make the best educational decisions for their children, it is crucial to offer them more flexibility in determining their children's educational path. Therefore, this bill is not only a matter of parental rights but also of ensuring that every child receives the highest quality of education possible. By supporting this bill, you are taking a crucial step towards empowering parents to make informed decisions regarding their children's education.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Shane & Dana Zaback