

10 March 2023

Honorable Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Shawn Gray. My wife, Carmen, and I live in Fargo and we have two children in the JPPII Catholic School system. Our son, London – 17, and our daughter, Jade – 11.

I strongly support HB 1532. We adopted Jade when she was three years old from an orphanage in Shanghai, China. She was found in a basket outside a subway station at People's Square at birth and spent until her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday in a state orphanage. Not only did she "miss" three years of development intellectually but socially and emotionally as well. When we moved back to the US when Jade was six, we wanted to choose a school environment that allowed smaller class size, one that would offer some personalized flexibility given her personal challenges. She has been in Nativity Elementary and they have been INCREDIBLE....they have had the ability to work with Jade, give us plans to help her grow and work towards reaching grade level expectations and have been incredibly understanding. All while having a faith component we feel is so important she couldn't get anywhere else. We can't imagine our daughter being in another environment.

The cost of a private education is substantial, but for us...this education is essential for her future. HB 1532 will allow us to continue Jade's path toward growth. Us and so many families like ours need this support.

I urge you to vote in favor of HB 1532.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of all North Dakotans, and thank you for your consideration in support of HB 1532.

Shawn & Carmen Gray

5807 Silverleaf Drive S, Fargo, ND 58104

701.306.0000