

Good Afternoon,

I am contacting you today to ask you to vote NO on HB 1532. I sent correspondence earlier this session urging a NO vote on HB 1532, but I need to reiterate again the importance of doing just that. Choosing to send a child to a private school to receive an education is a choice. This choice shouldn't be at the cost of educating public school students. Directing public dollars to a private institution is a bad idea. I am a proud public-school teacher with over 20 years of experience. Students and staff in our public school system should receive public dollars to further the education of our youth, and to provide for the many services students in our public schools.

Over the years, I have witnessed cuts to programs and staffing that harm our students' ability to receive a quality education. And now, even more money could be taken away from public schools at a time it is desperately needed. When I read that HB 1532 proposed monies for this project requires no accountability on the part of private schools I knew I had to act. This is disturbing and alarming! And a slap in the face to every public school system, student, and teacher in our state. It affects every child and community in North Dakota! As a public-school teacher, I am familiar with the requirements and red tape that is involved with purchasing necessary items for students and schools. Allowing public dollars to be used by a private institution is not okay. By funneling dollars away from public education, with no accountability, it would negatively impact everyone, but especially North Dakota's rural communities, served by public schools. They 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.

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. This is crazy! 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, 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.

In closing, allowing public dollars to go unaccounted for is alarming and I urge you to vote NO on HB 1532. Public schools accept everyone and must have the resources available to teach whoever walks through our doors. Education is important for all, but when parents choose a private school, receiving public dollars shouldn't be a part of that equation. Public dollars for public schools!

If you have questions, please contact me at 701-306-5746.

Sincerely,

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