

Senate Education Committee
March 14th, 2023
HB 1532 - Testimony in Opposition

Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Whitney Oxendahl, and I am writing in opposition to House Bill 1532. The \$24 million proposed for an educational reimbursement from the General Fund could instead be used to pay for school lunches for kids in our public schools or to pay our public school teachers competitive wages.

I am a homeowner paying property taxes that fund the public school district where my child attends first grade, and, if I have an issue with the school system, I can bring it to the public school board. These proposed reimbursement dollars would go to parents to help fund private schools that are not accountable to taxpayers and community members in this same way.

Payment of property taxes to fund our public schools is not based upon a property-owner having school-age children. Many people who do not have children or have no school-age children pay property taxes each year that help fund our public education system. Parents who send their children to private schools are not unique in paying property taxes to fund a school where their children do not attend.

I grew up going to private schools in Minot and Williston, because my parents chose to put me there when I could have been educated in public school for free. They paid for my schooling, and if other parents are choosing private education, they can also choose to pay for it themselves.

No one loses their school choice if this bill does not pass. Parents will still be able to choose from the private schools in their area. North Dakota taxpayers should not have to pay for this choice.

The House Appropriations Committee gave this bill a Do Not Pass recommendation, and I hope this committee does the same. Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony.