

Wahpeton School District #37

Dear Legislators,

If you are reading this it is because you care about the future of education in the state of North Dakota. I write this on behalf of myself as a taxpayer, a parent and also a teacher. This bill will DIRECTLY affect my family in each of these three ways.

As a taxpayer, I strongly disagree with the idea that the money that I pay each year will be used in part for vouchers for families that CHOOSE to send their children to private schools. It is never in the best interest of public interests to interfere with private interests. Private schools have always had the power to say NO to students, a power that public schools do not have. They have the ability to turn away students for a wide array of reasons. Reasons that the public schools do not get the choice to say no to.

As a parents, we always want the best education for our own children. But we also (both teachers) understand that public education can be just as great as private education when given the right amount of funding and opportunities. But when you take money away from public education and are giving HAND-OUTS to private schools, you are telling me that my family doesn't matter to you. My kids' education doesn't deserve all of the funding, just some of it. And that we should be giving vouchers to families that are already making the CHOICE to send their kids to private school. This is completely unfair for my kids.

As a teacher, I have one question. **How can you feel good about taking money away from our classrooms and giving money to classrooms that require an entrance fee?** A voucher program for private schools is a very slippery slope in education. It is completely inappropriate to give public funds to private schools without any accountability measures. And nowhere in this bill does it talk about prohibiting private schools from increasing tuition rates while also receiving state funds. So the way I see it, they can keep their prices the same while dipping into the public taxpayers pockets and getting even more benefits. I'm sorry but does that seem at all appropriate to you? If you let this bill pass, You will have a great deal of unhappy educators in a time of the year that teachers are already questioning their contracts for next year. At a time when teachers are leaving the profession in huge numbers. I STRONGLY believe that this bill could push more educators out, and that devastates me.

Overall, this bill would do an absolute disservice to all public educators, schools and students.

Please hear us,

Whitney Peterson

Wahpeton Public School Teacher