

To the Members of the 2023 North Dakota Legislative Session-

Public schools are the foundation of a free society. Every child in North Dakota is guaranteed a free and appropriate education that is provided by our public schools. The promise to educate students today will meet the needs of the workforce of the future. The tax dollars spent on public schools in North Dakota also come with many stipulations that districts, schools, and teachers must meet, or forego funding. Public schools, governed by locally elected school boards and open meetings laws, must account for every dime they receive from the taxpayers of North Dakota. HB 1532 requires no accountability for these expenditures on the part of the private schools who will receive them.

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. 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 learners, regardless of their limitations and abilities. **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. I am not aware of legislation to ensure this will take place.**

Finally, North Dakota's rural communities, served by public schools, 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. This bill takes resources from the state's 490 public schools in every community across the state to support private choices. Private choices should be funded privately.

My family has educational freedom; there is a wonderful private elementary school located in our community. I chose to send my children to the public elementary and middle schools because I believe in public schools! I write in strong opposition to HB 1532. **Until private schools are held to the same standards as public schools, I do not want my tax dollars supporting their mission.**

Sincerely,

Mrs. Megan Brejcha, B.S., M.Ed.
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