

March 14, 2023

Chairman Elkin and Members of the Senate Education Committee –

While I am a member of the Westhope Public School Board, ND State Board of Public School Education, and State Board of Career and Technical Education, I submit my testimony **in opposition to HB 1532** as a taxpayer and parent, heavily invested and engaged in the educational process of my children.

As a parent, one of the greatest rights and responsibilities available is choosing educational experiences *for* and *with* our children, including which school they attend. Families in our rural communities in the great state of North Dakota are farthest away from that opportunity to choose, therefore, many of us proudly engage in our local public schools. HB 1532 disproportionately benefits children and families with a suburban ND zip code. Tax dollars from our rural community would work to subsidize educational experiences in other communities, rather than supporting our own. This is detrimental.

As an educator myself, I understand that the needs of our rural educators, families, and most importantly, learners, require all resources currently available to us. I also understand that the current non-public school system in ND may not allow parents to choose. Rather, non-public schools are afforded the opportunity to deny educational experiences to any child, for any given reason. Further, if a non-public school chooses to enroll a child, they are not held to the high standards of transparency and accountability for student outcomes like public schools are.

Thank you for discussing parent choice and resource allocation, as it relates to education. Please oppose HB 1532.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lyndsi Engstrom".

Lyndsi Engstrom