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Lisbon Public Schools**School District No. 19**

502 Ash Street – PO Box 593

Lisbon, North Dakota 58054-0593 Phone: (701) 683-4106

High School Fax: (701) 683-4414

Middle School Fax: (701) 683-4111

Elementary School Fax: (701) 683-4415

"Providing Equal Opportunities for Employees and Students"

To Whom It May Concern,

I am submitting written testimony in opposition to HB 1590. This bill seeks to redirect public funds to support private education, which undermines our state constitution. The constitution clearly states that no money raised for public schools shall be used to support sectarian schools in North Dakota. It mandates that we fund a uniform system of public education. The students who attend public schools in North Dakota deserve this commitment.

While I believe Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) can benefit students across North Dakota, the provision in this bill that funds private schools should be removed. Doing so would create a fairer system for all families, regardless of where they live, allowing them to receive ESA dollars without violating our constitution.

Public schools in North Dakota serve 90 percent of students. Our public schools accept all students, regardless of their background—whether they have disabilities or face severe mental health challenges. No other entity in North Dakota provides such inclusive services. The work our public schools do is challenging and vital, requiring a strong financial commitment from our state to ensure that all students have the resources they need to become productive members of society. Our students are the future of our state and country, and investing in them should be a top priority.

I have no issue with ESAs benefiting all students across our state. My concern is that ESAs should not be directed towards families who choose to attend private schools. Attending private school is a choice, and public dollars should not be used to support that choice.

Sincerely,



Justin Fryer, Superintendent
Lisbon Public School District