

Hello,

I am writing to urge you to oppose the following six bills that propose using public dollars to fund private schools:

- HB 1540
- HB 1590
- HB 1607
- SB 2295
- SB 2303
- SB 2400

Regardless of how these bills are labeled—whether as education savings accounts, scholarship programs, or otherwise—if they divert public funds to private schools, they essentially function as vouchers.

I have spent ten years teaching in both public and private K-12 schools in Devils Lake, ND. The disparity between what public and private schools offer is significant. Public schools accept every student, ensuring that every child has access to education. This inclusivity demands a broad range of services and the ability to meet diverse needs, which, in turn, requires adequate funding.

I was proud to work at a private school in Devils Lake that went to great lengths to accommodate all students, providing necessary services without discrimination. However, the critical difference was that this private school has strong financial stakeholders and tuition fees to support these additional costs.

I want to emphasize that my stance is not to vilify private schools or the families who choose them. I believe our tax dollars should remain within the public education system. Having firsthand experience, I am acutely aware of the struggles classroom teachers face to provide even the bare minimum for their students. Public schools are not seeking extravagant raises, new buildings, or top-tier resources. What they are requesting, and what I am advocating for, is that tax dollars allocated for education should stay within public schools.

Finally, the majority of school districts in our state do not have access to private schools. From my observations, it is primarily our larger communities that benefit from private education options. These larger communities also enjoy a more substantial tax base, resulting in higher tax revenues for their schools. Diverting public funds to private schools would not only deprive our rural public schools of essential resources but also fail to benefit rural families who lack access to private education options.

Please oppose these six “voucher” bills and fight to keep public funds in the incredible public schools throughout North Dakota.

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