



North Dakota Small Organized Schools

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Chairman Heinert and Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed use of the North Dakota Common Schools Trust Fund for school construction, as outlined in subsection 4 of the proposed amendment to Section 2, Article IX of the Constitution of North Dakota. While addressing school infrastructure needs is vital, diverting funds intended for the ongoing maintenance and support of common schools sets a dangerous precedent and undermines the long-term stability of North Dakota's public education system.

The Common Schools Trust Fund was established to provide a stable, perpetual funding source for the operational needs of schools, ensuring quality education for generations to come. Using these funds for school construction—even temporarily—risks depleting an essential financial resource that is meant to support student learning, teacher salaries, and classroom resources. This proposal could lead to unintended consequences, such as reduced distributions for school operations in the future.

Furthermore, school construction is a long-term capital expense that should be addressed through dedicated infrastructure funding sources, such as state bonding mechanisms or targeted appropriations, rather than drawing from a trust designed to provide annual educational support. Redirecting these funds would erode the financial security of school districts and create future fiscal uncertainty.

I urge lawmakers to seek alternative funding solutions for school construction that do not compromise the integrity and sustainability of the Common Schools Trust Fund. Protecting this fund ensures that North Dakota's students continue to benefit from a strong, well-supported education system for years to come.

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