

Written Testimony in Opposition to SB 2355

Date of Hearing: 2/12/2025

Rev. Ellery Dykeman

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As a Lutheran pastor here in Minot, I stand in strong opposition to SB 2355, requiring the teaching of creationism and intelligent design in public school curricula.

Our faith encourages critical thinking and the pursuit of knowledge, and as such, we believe that education in public schools should be rooted in scientific consensus, not religious doctrine. Creationism, while an important part of many religious teachings, is grounded in personal faith, and lacks empirical evidence and does not align with the scientific method. The separation of church and state, as enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, ensures that public schools remain secular institutions, where education is based on universally accepted facts and research, not on religious interpretations and personal faith.

Allowing the teaching of creationism in public schools undermines the integrity of scientific education and violates the principle of neutrality in religious matters. Science is a methodical process of discovery that relies on evidence and peer-reviewed research, and it is essential for preparing students to engage in a complex and diverse world. Teaching creationism alongside or instead of established scientific theories like evolution can create confusion and undermine students' understanding of fundamental biological principles. As people of faith, we believe that both science and religion can coexist, but we also recognize that public schools must teach science based on proven knowledge, not on religious belief. Let's keep religious education in the home and congregation, and leave public education free to foster an educated, open-minded citizenry, with intellectual freedom.

Again, I appreciate the desire for religious education but let's not mix the complex and diverse array of biblical interpretation with the world of science. I oppose this bill and all the various ideologies that seek to mix faith and public education.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rev. Ellery Dykeman

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