

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to review my written testimony. I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 1532. As a taxpayer, I want my taxes to support public schools, and as a public-school teacher with nearly 40 years of experience, I know how precious every single state dollar is to our school fund. To put it simply, public schools cannot afford to have funds diverted to non-public schools.

We are privileged to teach every student in our district and to meet the needs of each child. At a time when there seems to be a general consensus that additional funding is required, it doesn't make sense to consider using some of those funds for tuition at a non-public school. As we deal with the additional challenges of post-pandemic education and teacher shortages, the thought of losing funding to pay for vouchers seems counter-productive. In addition, not every community has access to a non-public school, which means that tax-dollars would be funding private schools far from local taxpayers.

I completely respect the decision of families to send their children to a private school, and I believe that private schools provide benefits to the communities where they are located. That said, I do not think it is the responsibility of the taxpayers to fund any part of private tuition, which is why I urge you to say "no" to this bill.

I know how deeply each member of the House Education Committee cares about the education of our students. Our public schools are the hub of communities that are large and small across North Dakota. Please support our public schools so that we can continue to offer the choice of an excellent education to every single student in our state regardless of their needs or their location in the state. We have so much to be proud of and we have so much great work to do. Your support is valued and your willingness to listen is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

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