

Members of the North Dakota Senate Education Committee,

I'm writing to you today in opposition of HB 1532 which would funnel public tax dollars to private schools in the state of North Dakota.

Education is a right, not a privilege. In the United States, and in the state of North Dakota, each and every single one of us are guaranteed a public education, funded by public dollars. Section 1 of Article VIII of our state constitution says that "a high degree of intelligence, patriotism, integrity and morality on the part of every voter in a government by the people being necessary in order to insure the continuance of that government and the prosperity and happiness of the people, the legislative assembly shall make provision for the establishment and maintenance of a system of public schools. . ." Obviously, we know that education is important to our way of life both in the state, and the country. This is why the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction provides standards, guidelines and regulations which we as public schools are required by law to follow.

The same not is true, however of private schools in our state. Private schools are allowed to provide education which does not meet the same standard and scrutiny we have established as a right for our citizens. The right to seek a different form of education is a privilege in our state. It is a privilege, not a right, because it is not guaranteed or enforceable that every citizen be guaranteed it. Private schools have the ability to deny admission to students based on their discretion. This discretion can and has led to the exclusion of protected classes in our state, based on things such as race, religion, sex, and creed.

In addition, we the public (the taxpayer) have a simple recourse if we do not agree with what is occurring in public schools: the vote. If we disagree with the policies and the procedures in our public schools, we have the free ability to change those things through our elected officials. If I, as a private citizen wish to influence the policies and procedures of a private school, I have no recourse. They may discriminate, educate and spend my money without any form of objection.

For this reason and many others, I strongly oppose the HB 1532. Please feel free to reach out to myself for further comment or question.

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