

Senators,

03-12-2023

HB 1532 unfairly uses ND tax money to provide support to private schools, thus creating more reasons for families to pursue these opportunities for their children. Often, one of the strongest arguments for a family to seek private schooling is the fact that private schools are not responsible or held accountable to take all students, they can pick and choose and refuse. In our public education system in the state of North Dakota we are experiencing one of the largest increases in student needs. Those needs are not all academically based but range from social, emotional, mental, and physical safety outside of the school system; these are not the types of families that often try to enroll in private schools. Our public schools need additional funding now more than ever to try and meet these needs of our students in a society that demands that our educators not only educate our youth in traditional curriculum areas but must also attend to all of their physical, emotional, mental, and social needs.

There also seems to be no accountability or requirements that private schools would need to follow to manage these vouchers. I honestly have no idea why that would be allowed and hope this is an oversight as our public schools have many accountability reports and requirements to monitor funding and prove enrollment.

Is this bill fair to taxpayers in rural areas that are not remotely close to private schools to have their tax money spent in urban areas where private schools are plentiful? Never mind that these rural taxpayers are large supporters of home town public schools and consistently dig into their monthly budgets to support local fundraising that supports their schools where state and federal funding fall short. Yet see the struggles our educators and students go through day in and day out to educate ALL of our students no matter what their needs, their abilities, their handicaps, their mental struggles, their lack of a caring home, and the lack of resources available to our schools to try and provide for all of these areas by a more productive means.

I am not in favor of HB 1532.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Seamands', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Darin Seamands

Superintendent

Hettinger Public School District