

HB 1532 – Testimony in Opposition  
Senate Education Committee  
Senator Elkin– Chairman  
March 14, 2023

Senator Elkin and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Michael Heilman. I live in south Bismarck in District 30. My legislators are Representatives Glenn Bosch and Mike Nathe and Senator Diane Larson. Whom I proudly support but disagree with on this issue.

A little context on my background. I sent my children to St. Nicholas Catholic grade school in Garrison. I was on the school board at St. Nicholas School for several years. I have worked as a private school administrator and my time there was among some of the best professional educational experiences I had in my 40+ year career in education.

When our own children graduated from high school, we told them we would pay a certain amount of their college education. Our daughter decided to attend an out-of-state university at considerably higher cost than going to a North Dakota university. She borrowed money and we her parents cosigned the loans. I don't expect anyone else to pay for her choice, but perhaps I am wrong, and everyone should contribute to her loan payment or maybe we could have a complete forgiveness of her college debt as is being suggest or attempted at a national level. No! It was our choice and is our responsibility to pay for that choice, not the taxpayers of this state or any other for that matter.

I believe that having in the parental right to choice private education or home education, but I don't believe that I or anyone else should help fund that choice with public dollars. The state provides a for a free public education and establishes the rules and law that regulate it. If private education is to be publicly funded, it is no longer private and the same rules and laws need to be in place for all schools receiving public funding. I can live with a decision to fund private schools as long as the same rules apply. I do not believe our private schools want the rules and regulations, just the money. Wouldn't we all.

Please keep our private schools just that private and vote no on this legislation.

Thank you.