

To Whom it May Concern:

As a proud Minnesota public school teacher with over 20 years of experience, I am incredibly concerned with SF1311 and ask that you strike the language on lines 19.8 through 19.11 regarding faith based institutions and PSEO.

For context, I have taught in two large Minnesota K-12 district and also at the post-secondary for a technical college. I am a K-undergrad public school graduate and see the paramount importance of public education. This perspective allows me to express that I have seen how the right educational choice impacts the success of learners and I am incredibly concerned at the removal of faith based institutions as an option for our high school students taking advantage of the PSEO program.

First, PSEO is critical to help students gain important skills in the collegiate classroom, to decrease their debt load in the future, and to better ascertain what type of an institution they should attend after high school—size, 4 year or 2 year college/technical or community college. I have seen many students in the technical college setting find success because they have found the right size and type of post-secondary option. This is often after they have already “failed” at our larger state schools. Allowing students to attend a variety of colleges--private, small faith based schools included-- through PSEO allows students to find a better fit for themselves. This is about choice. I may not agree with every tenet of beliefs at the University of Minnesota, Normandale Community College, St. Thomas, etc. however my child can CHOOSE which school to participate with for PSEO based on the academic offerings and academic culture.

My own child is gifted academically, however she would have floundered in a large, public college setting for PSEO. Allowing her to utilize PSEO to attend a small, private college setting, which happens to be a faith based school, helped her to understand her challenges with ADHD and move toward treatment. This would not have happened in a large university PSEO setting.

In addition, students are able to select PSEO courses and colleges which have the greatest chance of transferring to the university they plan to attend in the future. That is not the case with all of the schools offered in the PSEO options for Minnesota. There are other non-faith based options, so it is about choice for students. This will significantly overload other four year colleges for PSEO in our state and severely limit our students’ options.

Choice is something Minnesotans have often touted as primary to freedom. I am incredibly disappointed that this doesn’t include my child choosing to attend a school for PSEO that is faith based. What a travesty.

I strongly request that you strike language disallowing faith based universities from the PSEO options for our students.

Sincerely,

Ann Wolff