

March 6, 2023

Dear Senate Education Committee,

First, I want to thank you for your willingness and commitment to serve the people of our state. The time and energy required to serve as a state senator is duly appreciated. I do also want to express my strong opposition to SF 1311 and specifically lines 19.8 through 19.11 where the following language is added: An eligible institution must not require a faith statement during the application process or base any part of the admission decision on a student's gender or sexual orientation or religious beliefs or affiliations.

This proposed amendment will limit the number of institutions providing PSEO classes and thereby limit the number of students who can participate in PSEO. Under current policy, no student in the state of Minnesota is prevented from taking PSEO classes based on race, creed, ethnicity, disability, gender, or sexual orientation or religious beliefs or affiliations. Though certain institution may have varying requirements, there are institutions available for all students wanting to participate in PSEO. If the objective is greater inclusivity, limiting the number of institutions providing PSEO is counterproductive toward that end. Legislating a more exclusive policy regarding the institutions allowed to offer PSEO will not contribute to greater student inclusivity. To the contrary, passing this measure will reduce the number of students able to benefit from what has been a positive educational option for students up to this point.

My daughter has registered for PSEO in the fall at an accredited college that would no longer be able to offer PSEO if the current bill passes. We are excited about the opportunity for her take classes there as she will likely continue her college career at the same institution. She has suffered a great deal of loss in the past three years including the deaths of two grandparents and an uncle on top of the challenges faced from the pandemic. We moved to Minnesota in 2020 and the adjustment has been quite difficult. Her excitement with PSEO at the institution she has been accepted to has been something we have not seen in a while. Should this bill pass, she will experience one more loss and will have to pivot yet again. Thousands of other Minnesota students would also find themselves scrambling to make other less desirable arrangements than the ones they already made. Our Minnesota students have faced enough educational changes and loss as a result of the pandemic. To pass such option limiting policy on the heels of the COVID pandemic is borderline cruel to our students. I urge the committee to strike this language and continue to allow a diversity of higher educational options for PSEO so the greatest number of Minnesota students can benefit.

Thank you again for your service to our state and your thoughtful consideration of my request.

Sincerely,  
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