

March 6th, 2023

Dear Education Policy Committee Chair Cwodzinski,

This is my written testimony and I'm asking for you to add this to the written record:

I am writing to express my opposition to the amendment to SF 1311 and ask that you strike the language on lines 19.8 through 19.11 of the original version of SF 1311 which states: 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.

I personally attended PSEO programs as a junior and senior in high school in 2005-2006. Simply put, these programs are invaluable to students. Taking college level courses in high school sets students up for success in a multitude of ways. This includes but is not limited to; being better prepared for college, stronger independence and work ethic, personal and professional leadership skills, and less tuition debt upon graduation.

Restricting access and funding to PSEO programs would be detrimental to so many students across Minnesota. These programs are providing much needed classes for the growing number of students utilizing the PSEO option. The law already only lets faith-based schools receive funding for “non-sectarian” courses. Forcing students away from faith-based colleges will increase competition for PSEO spots at secular universities and will limit the choices available to all students. Now that my oldest is in high school, he has been eagerly planning to take advantage of the PSEO option and its benefits. It breaks my heart thinking that access may be denied simply because he attends a faith-based school or takes PSEO classes at a faith-based school. Students state-wide have many choices about what institution they will attend for PSEO credits. No one is obligated to attend a faith-based college for PSEO. If that’s not to right path for someone, they can choose elsewhere. But it is the right path for many, and this amendment would exclude students like my son and many more. Please don’t prohibit these students simply because they attend or want to receive PSEO credits from a faith-based school. I can only hope that all parties would want students to have the freedom to choose the post-secondary institution that is the best fit for them.

Flexibility and educational options for PSEO programs is extremely important and valuable. Every college or university offers a different experience. The freedom to choose which institution fits each student best is essential. This is why I am strongly opposed to the amendment to SF 1311. Again, I am asking that you remove the language on lines 19.8 through 19.11 of the original version of SF 1311 which states: 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.

Thank You,

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