

March 6, 2023

Dear Minnesota Senate,

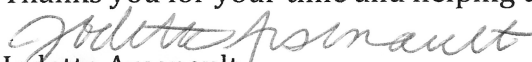
I am writing this letter to officially voice my opposition to the amendment to SF 1311. Please make this letter part of the Written Testimony for Wednesday, March 8, 2023. Please strike the language on lines 19.8 through 19.11 of the original version of SF-1311 which states: "An eligible institution 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."

All of our Minnesota kids deserve a proper education and the same opportunities as other students. A significant part of the opportunity in participating in PSOS is having the freedom of students state-wide to have many choices about what institutions to get their PSEO credits. Each student has different plans for their future and has unique needs for their educational goals. That is why there are a plethora of options available for PSOS to each student. PSOS is not a one size fits all scenario. There has been so much emphasis on equal rights for all students, equal education for all students and equal opportunities for all students. These are all important principles. By passing an amendment such as this, in effect, you will be creating a new form of discrimination, which punishes students who choose faith-based colleges for PSEO and in turn could be taking away opportunities for many students. In fact, 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.

My son is taking PSOS classes next year. We feel his best opportunities for education and career are provided at a faith-based university. This amendment would directly affect him by taking away his chosen educational options. Students should have the freedom to choose the post secondary institution that is the best fit for them, not be punished for their decision. This bill would affect a large number of students, as 25% of PSOS students attend PSOS at faith-based institutions. Please stand behind the ideals of allowing kids in Minnesota the freedom to choose the educational opportunities that are right for them by not allowing this amendment to pass. College tuition has been a big topic lately due to the large debt accumulated to attend college. Without PSOS opportunities, students would enter adulthood with much more college debt, moving in the wrong direction.

Please remove lines 19.8-19.11 of the original version of SF-1311 on Wednesday. These changes would discriminate against many students finding their best PSOS educational option in faith-based institutions. Every child learns different and has different needs. Please do not eliminate their ability to earn college credit via PSEO in High School just because they choose a faith-based college. These programs provide needed classes for the growing number of students accessing the PSEO option.

Thanks you for your time and helping us with this heartfelt issue.

  
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