

As a parent of a student currently utilizing the Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program and as a parent of two other children that plan on using it the near future, I would like to express my protest to the changes in senate bill SF1311 regarding the definition of an “Eligible Institution”.

My wife and I both attended a university here in Minnesota for our undergrad degrees. When our eldest child expressed interest in utilizing the PSEO program and wanted to attend a school that they were familiar with, we were thrilled that they chose our alma mater. My wife and I both received a high-quality education while we were there, and our child is currently receiving a great education there as well. However, we are highly concerned about the changes to the definition of an “Eligible Institution” for the PESO program because it puts their future education in jeopardy.

The PSEO program that my child is utilizing is at a school that does have a statement of faith for students that attend as a traditional student but it is not required for PSEO students. I am highly concerned that changes to the language would eliminate this school, and others like it, as an option for my children and thousands of other Minnesotans. The school that my child attends has specifically developed their PSEO program and tailored it towards remote learning which has given my student access to so much more then would be available to them otherwise. Removing these schools as an option for Minnesota students would be akin to cutting teachers in the public schools and yet still retaining the same number of students. This would only lead to fewer options for our high school students and further reduce the quality of education that they receive in this state.

There is no need to alter this definition of an “Eligible Institution”. The existing definition provides students with options for an education at the school that works best for them and there is already a requirement that the classes paid for by the PSEO program to be non-sectarian in nature. This proposed definition change only shows bias against schools that have a statement of faith and a desire to exclude these schools from providing quality education options to our students.

Please strike lines 19.8 – 19.11 from the original version of this bill and remove the definition changes of an “Eligible Institution” for the PSEO program.

Sincerely,

Adam Springer

In reference to:

Sec. 16.

Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 124D.09, subdivision 3, is amended to read:
Subd. 3.

Definitions.

For purposes of this section, the following terms have the meanings given to them.

(a) "Eligible institution" means a Minnesota public postsecondary institution, a private, nonprofit two-year trade and technical school granting associate degrees, an opportunities industrialization center accredited by an accreditor recognized by the United States Department of Education, or a private, residential, two-year or four-year, liberal arts, degree-granting college or university located in Minnesota. **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 race, creed, ethnicity, disability, gender, or sexual orientation or religious beliefs or affiliations.**