

Committee on Education Policy,

I am writing today as a parent and citizen of MN. I have 2 daughters; a first grader and a fourth grader. I am grateful for all of the opportunities our state has to offer, and I am devastated that one of those opportunities may no longer be allowed.

I would like to state my opposition to the amendment of the original version of SF-1311 and that you would strike the language on lines 9:8 - 9:11 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 want to live in a state that gives families the freedom to choose the post-secondary institution that is the best fit for them. 25% of PSEO students attend PSEO at faith-based institutions. These programs are providing needed classes for the growing number of students accessing the PSEO option. 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. It is also worth noting that students are entering adulthood with much less debt because of PSEO options. Lastly, students state-wide have many choices about what institutions from which to get their PSEO credits, so no one is obligated to attend a faith-based college for PSEO. Also I want to turn to the groundbreaking ruling in the state of Maine; Carson and Nelson v Makin, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Education, where the Supreme Court ruled that state education choice programs may not discriminate against religious schools.

Minnesota has always been a forerunner for education, putting the child first and promoting best practice when it comes to education. This is pro-child; a child should be able to choose where they want to be educated, whether it be a private institution or a public one without denial. This bill is discriminatory against youth who want a private, faith-based education. These are many of the reasons I strongly oppose the amendment to SF-1311. I am proud to be a Minnesotan; this state has always been ahead of the curve on the quality of education it offers our families. Let's keep it that way by striking the amendment to SF-1311.

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