

SB 57 Statement (for posting on SDCC website)

Senate Bill No. 57

Our Position: Oppose

Brief Description:

The South Dakota Catholic Conference opposes passage of SB 57, which would limit the ability of students receiving alternative instruction (e.g., homeschooled students) to participate in school district activities such as athletics and fine arts.

SB 57 would reverse a key component of SB 177, a 2021 enactment supported by the South Dakota Catholic Conference that reformed the state's laws regulating alternative education. SB 177 allows students receiving alternative education to participate in activities sponsored by the public school district in which they reside, or in another non-residential school district that may be selected under the terms of South Dakota's "open enrollment" statute. SB 57 would deny the ability of alternative education students to participate in activities of a non-residential district through the open enrollment program. It would limit alternative education students to participate in activities only through their district of residence.

Access to interscholastic activities can be important for the formation and development of children. The Church teaches parents are the primary and principal educators of their children, and that they need and are entitled to the subsidiary help of civil society and other institutions in fulfilling this sacred duty. Parents of alternative education students pay taxes to support public schools in South Dakota, and their access to participate in school activities should not be unjustly restricted.

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