

Dear Education Finance Committee,

3/28/23

I am writing with concern about the PSEO section of the DE1 Amendment on HF 2497, lines 69.32-70.3.

Overall, the prohibition of requiring a faith statement by post-secondary institutions violates those schools' first amendment right to freedom of religion. They have a right to state and operate by their religious beliefs. They have a right to require that students enrolled in their programs and taking in person classes on their campus also agree to abide by their faith statement.

This bill violates post-secondary institutions' free expression of religion. The Government cannot limit the free expression of an individual's or an institutions' religion.

If a student's beliefs differ from an institution's faith statement, that student can easily apply to other post-secondary institutions that do not have this requirement. There are many more PSEO options that do not require a faith statement than ones that do.

Please think more broadly about this issue than just the example of the Christian post-secondary institutions we have in Minnesota, such as Northwestern, Crown College and North Central. What if the post-secondary institution was Muslim, Jewish or even Catholic and wanted to ensure that everyone who attended classes was of the same faith? Certainly under the 1st amendment freedom of religion clause, any institution's right to do so is protected.

Also consider that by forcing these faith-based colleges NOT to require students to agree with a statement of faith, they will NO LONGER be able to offer in person PSEO classes.

Passing this bill will take away options and opportunities for ALL of Minnesota's PSEO students.

For these reasons, I ask you to consider removing lines 69.32-70.3 from the DE1 Amendment of HF2497.

Sincerely,

Karin Miller

Wife, Home Educator, Teacher from Dakota County