



1 HCR 3007 – Terminating State of Emergency

2 NDCEL Testimony in opposition

3 Good morning Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee. My
4 name is Dr. Aimee Copas. I serve as the executive director for the North Dakota Council of
5 Educational Leaders. NDCEL serves all of our school leaders in North Dakota including our
6 Superintendents, Principals, all directors (most all leaders with the exception of school boards and
7 teachers).

8 Since March 15, 2020, schools have been asked to perform behemoth tasks. Much like other
9 essential sectors of our society – things haven’t been the same since that time. While they are
10 slowing beginning see a light at the end of the tunnel to have a semblance of returning to “normal”
11 we aren’t there yet. Please allow me to elaborate. By March 17th, districts were already beginning
12 to respond and were seeing a very real emergency before them and before even required by any
13 action of the governor, began to strategize how we might be able to assure education for our
14 children would continue if we couldn’t get them back into our buildings. This effort was costly
15 emotionally, physically, and monetarily, but worth it. Schools have learned and adapted inside of
16 weeks and months to do things that would’ve taken a decade to amend to under other
17 circumstances. Teachers have been heroic. Administrators have been heroic. I don’t know a
18 school administrator in this state that worked less that 80 hours per week through the school year
19 and much of this year. Many of our teacher can say the same thing. I’ve personally witnessed
20 teaching get better, people adapt, people improve, and our student’s outcomes are improving.

21 Many states, unfortunately, weren’t as lucky as North Dakota. In some sectors of our great country,
22 education ground to an absolute stop and even a remote learning environment was not an option.
23 For those students, I am truly sad as it will be very difficult to bring them back up to speed.
24 However, here, we are seeing the learning happen. Our interim assessment scores are on the
25 rebound and our kids are catching back up. As we continue to walk toward face to face learning
26 again with our students, it will continue to speed the rate of positive change.



1 Throughout this pandemic, NDCEL has focused on how to make lemonades out of the lemons
2 we've been handed as school leaders. However, this bill could take all of those efforts and grind
3 them to a stop. We still have families opting for remote learning, and schools that are working to
4 integrate a blended learning model back into a full face to face model. These students are very
5 connected in most instances with their teachers. These teachers are going above and beyond daily,
6 as are administrators to keep these kids learning. The passage of this bill would end that. With
7 the passage, the funding for those students in a remote learning environment would end. We have
8 a group of teachers working remotely in the South East partnership to help elementary age children
9 who must be home due to underlying conditions of a family member or themselves. That
10 consortium is also keeping teachers with those same struggles employed and those kids are doing
11 well. In most schools we have at least some students and/or staff that are in quarantine and the
12 remote learning options are keeping our schools operational and kids in a learning environment.

13 We must still have the executive order in place through this session and school year so that our
14 schools can continue to operate and to honor and respect those families who need to remain in a
15 remote capacity for additional time. Without the order, funding for the students who are not
16 physically in our building would end. Their continued opportunity for success this year could be
17 greatly impeded.

18 There are bills being heard during session that could potentially allow a district to have some
19 instructional modality options when working with local school boards, but those bills don't impact
20 the here and now. Right now, we must continue to educate our students. The passage of this bill
21 would prevent that.

22 We humbly ask for this committee to continue to do what you've so wonderfully done for years –
23 support North Dakota schools and North Dakota kids by giving this bill a do not pass
24 recommendation. Thank you for your time.