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SB 2229
Senate Education Committee
February 2, 2021
Testimony of Alexis Baxley

Good afternoon Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Alexis Baxley, and I serve as the executive director of the North Dakota School Boards Association. NDSBA represents the elected school boards of all 175 public school districts and several special education units in North Dakota.

The North Dakota School Boards Association stands in support of SB 2229. Our member districts have been dealing with teacher shortages for quite some time. The shortages are particularly present in our smaller rural schools. This bill encourages student teachers to consider positions in rural districts they might not otherwise consider.

Those of us who grew up in rural communities know how great they can be. However, young adults who are freshly out of college in larger communities are often used to a certain level of amenities and are not willing to consider a position in a rural district. Our hope is that once these young teachers experience working and living in one of our many small communities, they might find it suits them and be willing to stay.

SB 2229 also helps young teachers with the costs of their education. In addition to using the scholarships for tuition costs, this bill allows student teachers to put those funds towards living expense, and ensure affordable lodging is available to the teacher. These benefits would allow a teacher to turn their focus to their first year of teaching and the mentoring provided to them and truly create a win-win for both district and teacher.

NDSBA supports SB 2229 for these reasons, and requests that the committee to give the bill a do pass recommendation. I would be happy to answer any questions.