

SB 2258

Senate Human Services

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Katie Fitzsimmons, NDUS Director of Student Affairs

701-328-4109 | katie.fitzsimmons@ndus.edu

Chair Lee and Senate Human Services Committee Members: My name is Katie Fitzsimmons and I serve as the Director of Student Affairs at the North Dakota University System. I am here today in strong support of SB 2258, as it would support our students who have experienced or currently are experiencing homelessness.

Gaining admission to college can be an uphill battle for any given student, but our students that are experiencing homelessness have more obstacles stacked against them. Though birth certificates are not required documentation for college admission, a birth certificate can unlock access to other services and types of identification. Homeless youth often need basic vital documents like a birth certificate to access employment, education, health, housing, and other needed services. The current process to acquire a birth certificate leads to a catch-22: people need a birth certificate to get an ID, and they need an ID to get a birth certificate. SB 2258 would eliminate this problem while adequately protecting against identity theft.

The best paths out of homelessness include education, employment, and adequate health care. Please help us remove barriers to those paths for our students experiencing homelessness. This small and simple bill has the potential to create a profound impact on how this vulnerable population accesses services, employment, and education in North Dakota.

I respectfully request a Do Pass on SB 2258 and am available to answer your questions. Thank you.