Testimony on HB 1441
Senate Industry Business and Labor Committee
March 8, 2021

Good Morning chairman Klein and members of the Committee. For the record, I am Nick Archuleta, and I am the president North Dakota United. North Dakota United is a union of professionals including North Dakota's outstanding public employees. Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure to testify in favor of this vitally important piece of legislation and urge a DO PASS recommendation for HB 1441.

Mr. Chairman, if I were to suggest any amendment to this bill, it would to be to remove the words, "consider studying" from line 9 on page 1 of the bill, and replace them with the word, "study.". If we have learned anything from this pandemic, it is that too many families in North Dakota and across the nation are living on the edge of financial ruin. A study by the Federal Reserve Bank in Minneapolis prior to the pandemic found that 40% of Americans could not afford an unexpected $400 emergency expense. Too many of our friends and neighbors in North Dakota do not have adequate health insurance. And too many people who need it do not have paid time off to care for themselves or loved ones with serious medical issues.

Chairman Klein and members of the Committee, HB 1441, as originally submitted, would not have addressed those first two issues, but it was aspirational in addressing the third. There is clearly a need for paid time off and, should a study concur with that analysis, this bill, again in its original form, could provide a means for addressing the issue. Ensuring that North Dakota's valued employees can care for themselves or their family members experiencing serious illness, or caring for a newborn, adopted, or a foster child, without fear of losing their jobs and income, should be a priority.

That said, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify today and to urge you to please give a DO PASS recommendation for SB 1441. I am happy to stand for any questions.