

## TESTIMONY SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1240

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Good afternoon chairman Elkin and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Madelyn House. I am a student of Political Science, Public Administration and Legal Studies at UND and currently serve as the University's Student Government Chief of Staff.

I am before you today to express support for HB 1240 on behalf of UND students. Over the past three decades, college tuition costs have risen to match attitudes of the American population as we place greater emphasis on the importance of obtaining a college degree. While a better educated society holds numerous economic and lifestyle benefits, students feel the pressure when it comes to the responsibility of funding their higher education.

The ND Career Builders Loan Repayment and Scholarship program "changes lives, builds communities, and makes a significant impact on North Dakota," (1). As a lifelong North Dakotan, I know how ND cities merits quality public education, emphasizes kind and authentic midwestern values, and highlights the importance of family friendly events. These values often align with those of new graduates choose a home in which they can build their careers, a family, and a future. The loan repayment and scholarship program outlined in chapter 15 of the North Dakota Century Code is one that empowers students and new graduates to stay in North Dakota and build their lives here.

From February to November of 2022, we saw the ND Career Builders program soar through a 40% increase in recipients and a 30% increase in donors (2). From this data we can gather two key components of success. First is transparent evidence that Career builders is achieving higher skilled workforce retention through loan repayments and scholarships. Second, the increase in donors indicates an endorsement of and interest in the continuity of a program that supports young talent in North Dakota.

Our Citizens and businesses recognize the significance of North Dakotans serving North Dakotans. Pride in this notion is further developed by the knowledge that these skilled workers were well educated within the state. College grads are key innovators in economic development in the cities in which they choose to settle. Retention of young talent in North Dakota is a high priority in both the business and higher education sector in the state.

I recognize that UND is a 4-year research institution, a university whose programs exceed the 4-semester qualification that is set by the program's loan repayments and scholarships. However, there is a statistically significant number of students who begin in two-year, associates, and/or technical programs that further their education at an institution such as UND. Scholarships and Loans acquired by ND Career builders allow many awardees the financial freedom to continue their education, further amplifying the "skilled" element of the skilled workforce in North Dakota.

Furthermore, HB 1240's acknowledgement of the need to provide for a transfer of funds between the loan repayment and scholarship sectors of the skilled workforce retention program is an addition we support. This transfer of funds allows the program to be accessible for students both before entering and after completing their higher education, while allowing the state board of higher education to be flexible from year to year in their appropriation of funds based on applicant needs.

To continue to support these programs would be a vote of confidence for, and worthy investment in North Dakota's present and future workforce. For these reasons, I, along with the students at the University of North Dakota, encourage a "DO PASS" recommendation on HB 1240. Thank you for your time and know that I am happy to stand for any questions the committee may have.

#### Cited Works

1. Builders, Career. "ND Career Builders." *North Dakota University System*, 2023, <https://ndus.edu/career-builders/>.
2. ND, US. "ND Career Builders Program Sees Increase in Both Recipients and ..." *North Dakota University System*, 2023, <https://ndus.edu/2023/01/19/nd-career-builders-program-sees-increase-in-both-recipients-and-business-partners/>.