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Testimony Before the House Education Committee
SB 2247
February 7, 2022

Chairman Heinert and members of the Committee, for the record my name is Nick Archuleta, and I am the president of North Dakota United. Respectfully, I rise today to urge a ***do not pass*** recommendation for SB 2247.

Mr. Chairman, SB 2247 represents just the latest volley in the culture wars surrounding education in our country. These culture wars did not originate in North Dakota but have, nevertheless and unfortunately, engulfed our state in often rancorous debate from kindergarten through university. The collateral damage, sadly, has included teaching professionals and the free exchange of ideas in higher education.

Chairman Heinert and members of the Committee, I want to point out just a few concerns we have with this bill. The first is that, to my knowledge anyway, there is no great hue and cry regarding “specified concepts” on higher education campuses across North Dakota. If our campus communities were at risk of being hurt by specified concepts, surely there would be an unmistakable alarm that such a threat existed. The fact is that our campuses are vibrant, safe environments for learning and we should remain proud of that fact.

Second, Mr. Chairman, college classrooms historically have been places that foster creativity, encourage inquiry of the human condition, and afford safe places to discuss and ponder the solutions to vexing problems that we have grappled with throughout our history. SB 2247 has the potential to change all that. We fear that this legislation will have a chilling effect on faculty and students as they delve deeply into social and other problems whose solutions remain elusive.

Finally, Chairman Heinert and members of the Committee, we question why this bill is even necessary in a university setting. All parties that would be affected by SB 2247 are adults, fully capable of discerning the information they receive. If students feel that they are receiving untruthful educational materials or are being mistreated by faculty for any



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reason and in any way, there are already policies in place that the student may utilize to get relief.

For these reasons, Chairman Heinert, and Members of the Senate Education Committee, I respectfully ask for a ***do not pass*** recommendation for SB 2247. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to attempt to answer any questions you may have.