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Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Faith Wahl, and I serve as the Student Body President at the University of North Dakota (UND). I am providing testimony supporting SB 2288, relating to nursing program matching grants.

SB 2288 proposes awarding one dollar in matching grants for every two dollars raised by accredited institutions of higher education in North Dakota for projects dedicated exclusively to the advancement of academics for each institution's nursing program. If passed, this program would be extremely beneficial for UND students for several reasons. First, UND is ranked as the “#1 Top Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program in ND by nurse.org” [1]. As the top-ranked nursing program in the state, UND currently attracts a national audience to the state for the high-quality education program. If SB 2288 were passed, the program would create additional incentives to recruit and retain students to North Dakota and help address critical workforce needs in the state. Passing SB 2288 would not only benefit nursing students and programs throughout the state but would indicate an investment in the state and the future care of its' population.

In addition to helping recruitment efforts for the state and advancing academic programs, SB 2288 follows a model of a similar program that uses state-appropriated funds to incentivize private donors to give back to institutions – the Challenge Grant. Established in 2013, the Challenge Grant has helped provide North Dakota institutions with scholarships for students, research, technology, educational infrastructure, and more [2]. The successful model of the Challenge Grant that parallels the matching grant program outlined in SB 2288 indicates that this bill would also be successful in incentivizing private donors to give back and have their donations matched by the state. As the top nursing program in the state, it is clear that UND and its nursing students would benefit from the scholarship opportunities, innovative technology, and updated educational infrastructure that could come as a result of SB 2288.

[1] <https://und.edu/programs/nursing-bsn/index.html>

[2] https://ndlegis.gov/files/committees/67-2021/23_5162_03000appendixk.pdf

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education committee, I respectfully request a **DO PASS on SB 2288**. Thank you for your time, and I am available to answer any questions that you might have.

Respectfully submitted,

Faith Wahl

UND Student Body President

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