

**SB 2288**February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023

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Chair Bekkedahl and Members of the Committee: My name is Christopher Scott. I am current President of the North Dakota Student Association, and I am writing this in support of SB 2288. If passed, this bill would create an allocation for a matching grant gearing at helping the advancement of an institutions nursing program.

The North Dakota Student Association was established in 1969 dedicated to ensuring that students have a voice at the table in policy that affects Higher Education. We consist of delegates from each of the 11 public institutions meeting monthly to engage students in ND Higher Education policy. Our mission is to empower students, create collaboration between the student bodies of the North Dakota public universities, and to give a student perspective on higher education policy.

Traditionally, the NDSA has supported various scholarships over the years. One of the programs we have supported over the years is the Challenge Grant, which is a matching grant program that is very similar to the one proposed in this bill but more broad. This bill directly targets funding NDUS nursing programs and would help address workforce shortages in that area.

In the last few years, we as a state have recognized the need for more nurses and medical care staff. This was made especially clear during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic two years ago, when nurses and medical care staff were overburdened due to the large influx of patients and a low quantity of staff. This bill would help increase the quality of our nursing programs across the state, attract more students including those from out of state, and thereby increase the total

number of medical care personnel in North Dakota. And so, the NDSA supports SB 2288 and would ask for a DO PASS recommendation from the committee.