



1 SB 2284 – Funding Bill

2 Testimony in support

3 Senator Elkin and members of the Senate education committee, we are here supporting  
4 NDCEL and we are here to explain our support for specific areas of this bill. We do so  
5 with the understanding that this bill is typically a bill we work on through conference  
6 committee and to the end of session. That being said, it is important to understand our  
7 rationale for support in a number of areas.

8 Let's start with the State Board of Public Education. Since 1999 when the Governor  
9 began appointing to this board, the law has stood regarding the 3 associations sending  
10 to the governor a list of candidates from which he was to appoint from by law. Over the  
11 years, there have always been at least 2 members of NDSBA on the board (by law) and  
12 have always otherwise been occupied by at least three active school superintendents and  
13 sometimes by 4. The reason for this is that the issues this board deals with begs for a  
14 board that is steeped in educational knowledge. The three associations have always  
15 agreed on this and that has never changed. Under the current Governor administration,  
16 he's instituted his own board application procedure and that procedure has determined  
17 his appointments, not law. In the most recent appointment (you will hear more about  
18 this) the recommendations of the 3 associations were ignored and the appointees were  
19 not taken from the groups (as prescribed by law) and instead were purely chosen at the  
20 whim of the governor. This amendment maintains the required two board members  
21 who should be the voice of the people, at least two superintendents and allows the  
22 governor two others at his leisure which we feel is a more than generous offer. Every

*NDCEL is the strongest unifying voice representing and supporting administrators and educational leaders in pursuit of quality education  
for all students in North Dakota.*

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governor since 1999 has wholeheartedly respected and appreciated this process until recently.

As we look at other areas of this bill there are many good things worth mentioning and worth keeping. They all benefit the field.

- Better of spring or fall ADM protects our smaller schools who experience ADM declines at times. They are valuable schools, and we need to keep them sustainable. One year of budget preparedness is not too much to ask for to protect those communities and those students who receive their education there.
- On time funding is important for growing districts so they can manage the challenges of increasing classroom sizes, new buildings, and new services.
- Per pupil increases are important to not only manage inflation but also so we can offer our very deserving staff adequate pay to remain competitive in the field
- Enhancement in the school construction loan funds help local communities and provide intrinsic property tax relief.
- Some of the studies being offered in this bill can provide either pilots or studies of efficiencies that can help our schools

We ask this committee to look at this bill in a favorable light, and frankly to hold to the ideals that we are asking for understanding of what is better for students is more important than is application of more power given to any position in government. If we are protective of big government, we must remain carefully protective of balance of power just as your legislatures that have come before you.