

Testimony in Opposition of SB 2240

Presented by: Dr. Alyssa Martin, NDCDE State Director

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Chair Heinert and members of the House Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. For the record, my name is Dr. Alyssa Martin, North Dakota Center for Distance Education's (NDCDE) state director. On behalf of NDCDE, I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 2244.

NDCDE understands and appreciates the intent behind this legislation to ensure that families are informed and engaged. We also recognize and support the important role parents play in guiding their children's education. Our agency already complies with many of the transparency and access measures outlined in the bill. For example, parents and proctors have continuous access to their students' course content, communications, and progress through our systems, and our team works closely with families to support student success. However, as others have noted, the bill presents several broad and complex implications for public schools. We echo concerns shared by other education stakeholders related to feasibility, implementation, and liability.

In addition, NDCDE brings a unique perspective as a state agency and a provider of public virtual instruction across North Dakota. We offer online, asynchronous courses to students statewide and serve more than 30,500 enrollments this biennium. To maintain academic integrity in a remote environment, many of our courses require students to submit audio or video recordings. These assignments are used solely to assess student understanding and deter academic dishonesty. Once a final grade is awarded, the recordings are deleted in accordance with our established data retention schedule.

If this bill were interpreted to require parental consent for each individual assignment involving a student-created video or audio submission, it would introduce a significant burden on our operations. Coordinating and tracking parental consent at this scale would delay instruction, hinder grading, and likely require hiring additional staff solely for this purpose. This would result in operational costs that could not be absorbed without additional state funding.

We appreciate the sponsors' dedication to parental engagement. Our intent in offering this testimony is not to question the value of parental rights, but to respectfully request that the committee consider the practical impacts this bill may have on schools and agencies like ours that already operate with transparency and accountability. For these reasons, we ask for a "do not pass" on this bill. Thank you for your consideration.