

**Chairman Headland and Members of the House Finance and Taxation Committee,**

My name is Aaliyah Martinez, and I'm writing today as an everyday citizen of North Dakota. I'm speaking in favor of Senate Bill 2281, and I sincerely hope you'll support it with a Do Pass recommendation.

Tobacco use is one of the biggest causes of preventable illness and death in our state. It's linked to heart disease, cancer, lung disease, and a lot of other serious health problems that not only affect people but also put a huge strain on our healthcare system. As a state, we have the chance to make a real difference by taking action to reduce tobacco use.

One of the most effective ways to do this—especially when it comes to preventing young people from starting—is by raising tobacco taxes. This bill proposes an increase on cigarettes, cigars, electronic smoking devices, and other tobacco products. Research has shown time and again that higher prices discourage kids from trying tobacco and encourage current smokers to quit. This isn't just about generating money for the state—it's about saving lives and cutting down on future healthcare costs.

Passing Senate Bill 2281 would be a huge step in the right direction for a healthier North Dakota. By supporting this bill, you'd be helping to reduce tobacco-related health problems and lessen the burden on our healthcare system. I respectfully ask for your vote in favor of this important bill.

Thank you for your time and for considering my perspective.  
Aaliyah Martinez, Concerned Citizen, Fargo