

Senate Bill 2221
House Human Services Committee
Representative Ruby, Chairman
Monday, March 17, 2025

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2221

Chairman Ruby, Vice Chairman Frelich and the House Human Services Committee:

My name is Julie Traynor. I am a nurse in ND and the Director of the Dakota Nursing Program Consortium. I am providing written testimony in support of Senate Bill 2221.

Over the past decade, I have found it increasingly more difficult to hire nursing faculty who are academically qualified to teach our students. A nursing faculty is required to have a master's degree or higher to teach in the classroom or to supervise RN students in the clinical area. Senate Bill 2221 will financially assist nurses to advance their degrees to become qualified to teach our nursing students. The bill adds a master's in nursing program to the skilled workforce student loan repayment program.

I have talked to many registered nurses with baccalaureate degrees who do not have the financial ability to fund a master's degree. There are many reasons, examples are: the nurse is the family's primary wage earner, they want to help fund their children's college educations, or they want to save for retirement. Tuition assistance provided by the skilled workforce student loan repayment program will make a difference in recruiting some of these nurses.

The Dakota Nursing Program partners and satellite locations are based in many rural areas where the nursing shortage is more intense than in urban areas. If we can get a few more nurse educators, we can educate more nurses. At one of our colleges, we have been trying to recruit a nurse educator for almost a year. This next fall, we may have to drop from two cohorts of students to one cohort of students for lack of faculty.

I ask for your support to pass SB 2221 to assist with growing a strong nursing workforce in North Dakota.

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