

## Testimony in Support of SB 2221

Sunday, March 16, 2025

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

My name is Richelle Johnson, and I am a nursing educator in North Dakota dedicated to preparing the next generation of nurses to meet our state's growing healthcare demands. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2221, a bill that directly addresses the urgent need for both nurses and nursing educators in our state.

North Dakota is facing a critical nursing shortage, and a key component of strengthening our workforce is ensuring we have enough qualified nursing faculty to educate future nurses. SB 2221 supports this effort by expanding the skilled workforce student loan repayment program to include master's-prepared nurses who commit to teaching clinical courses. This investment will not only ease the financial burden for those pursuing advanced nursing education but also increase the number of educators available to train new nurses.

As a nursing educator, I see firsthand the impact of faculty shortages on our ability to expand nursing programs and graduate enough nurses to meet patient care needs. This bill is a proactive solution that strengthens our workforce by recruiting and retaining both practicing nurses and educators in North Dakota. Participants in this program will gain financial assistance while also contributing to the profession by teaching—helping to ensure that our healthcare system remains strong for years to come.

I urge you to support SB 2221 with a **Do Pass** recommendation to build a sustainable nursing workforce and invest in the future of healthcare in our state. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Richelle Johnson*

Richelle Johnson DNP, RN