

Representative Mike Lefor

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HB 1188 Testimony

Good morning, Chairman Beard and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Mike Lefor and I serve District 37 - Dickinson in the House of Representatives. This morning, I bring HB 1188 to you for your consideration.

HB 1188 is a bill being brought forward after the Career and Tech academies across the state and the state agency, the North Dakota department of career and technical education met and are requesting some adjustments to century code.

Under current law, career and tech academies are required to assess their operational costs based on school membership and not on actual utilization or ability to access center programs. Using the Southwest Career and Tech academy as an example, the Killdeer school district makes up about 10% of the high school participation of the partner schools and Dickinson Public Schools makes up about 71% of the total number of high school students.

At the present time, fees are assessed on the student population in each school and not on utilization. In a large geographic area, as the SW Academy serves this provides an unrealistic cost to smaller school's miles away. This hinders the ability for the schools to participate and prices them out of participation.

This bill would allow the centers to still assess fees based on student population but gives the center the ability to assess remaining costs based on utilization, geography or whatever the local board determines that works best for them.

The centers across the state are different in the areas they cover, the programs offered, and facilities they operate. Under current law, it isn't cost effective for Beach, Bowman, Killdeer and others outside of 25 miles from Dickinson to pay the higher cost as their utilization is lower, this bill gives the local board the flexibility to assess fees based on utilization.

The bill breaks down school districts into two categories, first "participating" school districts which are assessed a membership fee based upon their high school enrollment as compared to the total high school enrollment of all participating

districts in the area and the new language on page 1, lines 13 and 14 states they "may assess fees based upon access and use of programs."

The second category is the non-participating school districts, can allocate quote "as nearly as possible" on line 17, based on utilization of these school districts. Further, on page 1 - lines 21 through 24 and page 2 - lines 1 through 4 eliminates current statutory language pertaining to mobile units so this language is not necessary.

Small schools which are miles away want to be member schools and have a seat on the CTE board, however the excessive cost of being assessed on their total high school enrollment makes it unreasonable. If we want to create access and drive enrollment at our CTE centers from all schools, local boards need to have the ability to assess their fees on what makes sense for their partner schools.

The 13 CTE Center expansion projects across the state all look very different. Some will serve a small geography of only 20-23 miles while others need to serve schools over 90 miles from the center. Some operate with only three schools, while others serve 10-15. This bill gives local control, which is crucial for that elected board, responsible to their constituents to make the decisions on what is best for their budgets and students.

In conclusion, this bill provides a path toward allowing more students to participate in career and technical education without having their school district have to pay a disproportionate amount to do so. I would ask your committee for a "do pass" recommendation. Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.