

March 21, 2025

Dear Chairman Wobbema and members the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

My name is Karla Haug. I hold a Master's Degree in Nursing Education, am currently enrolled in the NDSU PhD in Education program, and am an Assistant Professor of Practice at North Dakota State University. I write on my own personal behalf, not on behalf of the university.

As a faculty member at one of our state's educational institutions, I urge you to recommend a **DO NOT PASS** on proposed House Bill 1220, "the creation of a North Dakota accelerated degree for high-demand occupations."

I also ask that you review my testimony submitted to the House Education Committee in January. My arguments related to concerns for nursing accreditation are still valid.

I would like to provide rebuttal against statements in Representative Motschenbacher Testimony dated 3/20/2025:

Statement 1: "Section 1, subsection 1 further clarifies that offering these degrees is optional. No industry or college is mandated to offer this alternative degree. It is completely optional."

Response: Yes – following this bill is option. However, the State Board of Higher Education is already working on creating an option for shorter degree options. Why is this bill required?

Statement 2: "Section 1, subsection 1d specifies that any general education credits "may" not be included."

Response: The word "may" produces ambiguity and inconsistency. It implies options which could lead to unequal opportunities and confusion. The argument to support General Education requirements in all degrees is expressed in multiple testimonies submitted to the House and to this Committee. General Education is also a requirement for the accreditation of the institutions. If degrees institutions that are offered are without general education; we may also be without accredited institutions.

Statement 3: "Subsection 2 on page 2 designates which areas of expertise are considered "high demand" occupations"

Response: The bill states that it will determine annually which degrees should be offered by institutions. This is just not realistic. Institutions cannot be changing offerings quickly or be constantly changing curriculums. Curriculum development and approval take a minimum of a year to complete, often two.

Statement 4: "Subsection 3 simply states that ND will recognize the degree as being able to be licensed to work in our state"

Response: This bill will require licensing boards to recognize the degree even if they do not support it. Some licensing boards have requirements which might not fit these degree requirements. Is there confirmation from all licensing boards in ND that this degree option will meet their requirements? The Board of Medicine has posted testimony that it will not.

Statement 5: “Subsection 4 allows the SBHE to adopt rules to implement this.”

Response: SBHE already has the ability to adopt changes in education requirements. They do not need this bill to do so. And again, they are working with institutions to create options degrees with a shorter degree pathways.

Having grown in rural North Dakota with family roots still in rural North Dakota, I understand the frustration our rural communities face. But pushing students through degrees won't automatically fix any workforce issues or draw students to rural areas. This bill certainly brings to light the fact that our institutions need to look at options, but we don't need this bill to do that.

I urge you to recommend **DO NOT PASS** on this bill.

Thank you,

Karla Haug