



# North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association

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**Testimony of Laura Beaudoin, Veterinarian  
In Support of SB 2003  
March 8, 2021**

Chair Monson and members of the Committee:

I am Dr. Laura Beaudoin, and I am an associate veterinarian at State Avenue Veterinary Clinic in Dickinson. I am here today as the president of the North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association (NDVMA). On behalf of NDVMA, I'd like to voice support of SB 2003, specifically the funding for the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP).

NDVMA has spent more than a century representing the interests of veterinarians, their clients and patients. Today, the organization has more than 300 members representing small and large animal, exotic, bovine, and equine practitioners, as well as those veterinarians working in research, academic and government capacities.

PSEP enables students to enroll in academic programs not available in North Dakota and receive financial aid to cover the extra cost of out-of-state tuition. Veterinary medicine is one of these programs, an occupation that is essential to North Dakota, but yet not offered by any of our educational institutions. As a former recipient, I can provide a first-hand testament to the value of the program and how it allowed me to pursue a career in veterinary medicine.

This program allows North Dakota students, like myself, to be able to pursue a career while not saddling us with the extreme costs of out-of-state tuition. Without PSEP, out-of-state veterinary education costs could prohibit North Dakota students from considering it as a viable career option. Unfortunately, the median annual salary for a ND veterinarian with 3-4 years of experience is only about \$76,000. This salary doesn't make for a living wage when even the lowest cost veterinary program will cost an out-of-state student over \$200,000 in just tuition. Even with the PSEP program, the average ND veterinary student graduates with an average of \$163,000 in loans. After my parents and I crunched the numbers when I was applying to veterinary colleges, I turned down an offer of an out-of-state slot at Colorado State University because I knew I wouldn't be able to make enough money as a large animal veterinarian in ND to be able to make minimum loan payments. I was forced to consider pursuing a different career altogether or take the slot knowing I wasn't going to be able to return home. Thankfully, my story has a happy ending, as I ended up qualifying for a PSEP slot and was able to return to North Dakota four years later and start my career as a mixed animal veterinarian.

PSEP is important in supporting our students in their education by providing the opportunity to study programs that aren't offered at North Dakota colleges. PSEP is instrumental in keeping education costs reasonable for our students which will allow veterinarians to return to ND to practice instead of forcing them to look for more lucrative jobs around the nation just to be able to make their loan payments.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee and express support SB 2003. NDVMA appreciates your support of PSEP in the past and strongly encourages its continued funding.