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**Testimony of Landis Larson, ND AFL-CIO President
In Support of HB 1413
January 25, 2021**

Chairman Owens and members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Landis Larson, President of the North Dakota AFL-CIO. The North Dakota AFL-CIO is the federation of labor unions in North Dakota, representing the interests of all working people in our state.

I am testifying on behalf of the North Dakota AFL-CIO in support of House Bill 1413.

The North Dakota AFL-CIO fully supports providing all North Dakota public school children with no-cost meals as a basic part of their education.

Over the last few years, our federation has really taken an interest in the basic importance of all working families to have access to nutritious food, something made even more challenging by the pandemic. As a federation of labor unions, we have worked to raise thousands of dollars for our food banks and participated in efforts to raise money to alleviate school lunch debt in school districts around the state. We believe that this bill is the surest, simplest way to solve the problem of school lunch debt as well as ensuring that all our students have the nutrition they need to learn and thrive while under our care at school.

We also know that times have been very difficult for many working families with school age kids in North Dakota, and thankfully the federal government stepped in to ensure that all kids could access school meals during the pandemic. We know that has saved many working families hundreds of dollars each month that would have otherwise been spent on food, allowing them to pay bills and meet their other pressing financial obligations. We think that this savings to working families would be beneficial going forward, and believe that this is an important investment in the future of our state.

I recommend a "Do Pass" on House Bill 1413.

Respectfully Submitted,
Landis Larson
North Dakota AFL-CIO President