



## NORTH DAKOTA SENATE

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**COMMITTEES:**  
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### **SB 2289 – Creation of a North Dakota Scholarship February 10, 2021 | 9:00 am Senate Appropriations Committee**

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, for the record, I'm Erin Oban, senator for Bismarck's District 35. I'm here to bring forward SB 2289 for the Committee's consideration after receiving unanimous approval from the Senate Education Committee.

Very briefly, if SB 2289 would become law, for the next few years, our state's high school graduates would have *three* different opportunities to qualify for a scholarship – the existing academic or CTE scholarships (through 2024), or the addition of a "North Dakota scholarship" program aligned to North Dakota's Choice Ready Framework, a state plan to assist educators to ensure all students successfully depart high school possessing the essential skills necessary to be ready for post-secondary, the workforce, and/or the military.

To date, our state's academic and CTE scholarship programs have been effective incentives for students to work hard, choose specific pathways or enroll in upper-level courses, and focus on high achievement in the areas of academics or CTE. For that reason, it makes great sense to align the financial incentives offered by our state to what we expect from our students when they graduate.

This isn't about increasing the threshold to earn a scholarship. With the North Dakota scholarship, if graduates hit the marks outlined in 2 of 3 of the paths of the Choice Ready Framework with the GPA and test scores of the *existing* requirements to earn an academic or CTE scholarship, they will qualify for the North Dakota scholarship.

On July 31, 2024, the bill sunsets our academic and CTE scholarships and leaves only this North Dakota scholarship. The reason the bill has a fiscal note is because of those effective dates and the few years of overlap when all three options are available, qualifying an estimated 85 additional students. This transition period is an effort to ensure we don't pull the rug out from any current students who have already started working toward earning the academic or CTE scholarships in current law.

For reference:

- Section 1 – Makes the "North Dakota scholarship" effective in time for the graduating class of 2022.
- Section 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, and 11 – Sets and sunsets all the requirements and eligibility for the academic and CTE scholarships on July 31, 2024, effective starting with the graduating class of 2025.
- Section 4, 6, 8 – Makes effective and sets eligibility for the "North Dakota scholarship".

Mr. Chairman, I recognize the position you're all in in making strategic choices with the dollars we have available. And there may come a point when we need to review if the thresholds we've set for qualifying for scholarships are the right ones. However, at the very least, our financial incentives should align to our expectations, and that's what SB 2289 would do.

I respectfully request the Committee's positive recommendation and would stand for questions.