HB 1388
Senate Education Committee
March 15, 2021
Testimony of Alexis Baxley

Good afternoon Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Alexis Baxley, and I serve as the executive director of the North Dakota School Boards Association. NDSBA represents the elected school boards of all 175 public school districts and several special education units in North Dakota.

The North Dakota School Boards Association stands in support of HB 1388. We appreciate all of the input, research, and work that went into the drafting of this bill. We recognize that the bill will make winners of some of our members and losers of others, we believe these changes will help bring more districts onto the formula and are necessary to create a more equitable, adequate formula for all in the long-term.

We believe the transition period for transition minimum and maximum schools will give districts time to prepare and adjust their budgets incrementally, again, creating a more equitable, adequate formula for all.

However, we would like to see the one percent increase to the per pupil payment that was included in the original bill, but removed by the House, restored. The per-pupil increase is absolutely essential to successfully moving districts on to the formula. We recognize that it is tempting to remove that increase due to the influx of federal impact funds, but it is important to note that these funds are one-time funds that will run out. If we use these funds to supplement the per-pupil payment and employee pay, it will create significant issues down the road.

Restoring the per pupil increase will allow districts to direct these impact funds towards items that can have a long-term impact on the district and reduce local taxpayer burden.

NDSBA supports HB 1388, appreciates any consideration you may give to reinstating the per pupil increase, and requests that the committee to give the bill a do pass recommendation. I would be happy to answer any questions.