

January 25, 2021

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 2269. My son is a 2017 graduate of Dakota College at Bottineau. He earned this credential while attending Minot State University's ASTEP Program, which he participated in for three years. ASTEP provided an abundance of services and support for my son 24 hours a day. Without the comfort of knowing that he was in "good hands," his father and I most likely would have never allowed him to attend a college over a hundred miles away from his home. We didn't have to worry. The staff and student mentors of ASTEP were exceptionally professional and efficient. Watching him transition from high school to college is an experience that we will forever be grateful for!

We were fortunate that our school district was able to seek funding for him to attend college through ASTEP, along with financial help from our Tribe's Education Department. I am completely aware that many students with Development/Intellectual Disabilities in this state are not afforded this wonderful opportunity. Our students with Development/Intellectual Disabilities are WORTH it. This experience for them is worth every single cent their respective school districts receive for them. Being born with a Developmental/Intellectual Disability is neither the student's nor the parent's fault and so there should be NO reason for them to be penalized by the very school districts that are RESPONSIBLE for not only their education, but their DEVELOPMENT.

The skills and opportunities these students, YOUR students, will receive will be remembered by THEM and will IMPACT them in more positive ways than your "typical" college students. This opportunity for them is worth more than any "weighted" funding standards.

I am respectfully asking all of you to make this opportunity available to this State's students with Development/Intellectual Disabilities and to vote YES to S.B. 2269.

Respectfully Submitted,

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