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Testimony Before the House Education Committee
HB 1271
January 23, 2023

Chairman Heinert, Vice Chair Schreiber-Beck and members of the Committee, I am Nick Archuleta, president of North Dakota United. On behalf of our 11,500 members, I rise today to urge very respectfully a **do not pass** recommendation for HB 1271.

I have no doubt that the author and sponsors of HB 1271 submitted this bill with the very best intentions. The teacher shortages we see across the state are alarming and I applaud their attempt to help mitigate that shortage. However, HB 1271, we believe, is flawed in that in attempting to solve one problem, it exacerbates another.

Our concern is the effect that this piece of legislation will have on the Teacher Fund for Retirement (TFFR) should its provisions be enacted into law. If a teacher returns to teaching, while drawing benefits, that individual is taking the place of a teacher who would otherwise be paying into the TFFR. The solvency of the fund is dependent on investment returns, employer contributions, and employee contributions. Without employee or employer contributions, insolvency is hastened and an important tool for the recruitment and retention of future education professionals is removed.

Again, Mr. Chairman, we appreciate the good intentions of the sponsors of HB 1271 but due to its serious unintended and deleterious impact on the TFFR, we cannot support it. Therefore, Chairman Heinert and members of the Committee, we strongly and respectfully urge a **do not pass** recommendation for HB 1271.