



1 Testimony in Support

2 HB 1300

3 Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee...representing  
4 NDCEL and your educational leaders across North Dakota, we come to you in support  
5 of HB 1300.

6 In North Dakota, the building and maintenance of K12 school buildings is primarily the  
7 responsibility of the local taxpayer – while the state generally takes care of higher  
8 education buildings. In K12 education we recognize there must be a mechanism in each  
9 district that operates a building to manage deferred maintenance. As we’ve discussed in  
10 the funding formula based on the 2012 Odden Report which set the stage for our funding  
11 formula for academics, the per-pupil payment was meant to manage the ability to offer  
12 a core of academics. It is important to remember what the state funds and what it does  
13 not. Extracurricular activities are not funded. Buildings are not funded. Transportation  
14 is only funded at 40%. Nor was the formula designed for building upkeep or  
15 maintenance. Furthermore, as an instructor at the University of Mary that teaches  
16 school facilities, one of the greatest preventative measures of costly building replacement  
17 or large-scale renovation, is appropriate maintenance and upkeep. However, as funds  
18 are tight in many communities and districts, and some simply do not have voter approved  
19 levying authority (about 40 districts) we are seeing deferred maintenance issues grow  
20 statewide.

21 Deferred maintenance can have a major impact on occupant safety, asset performance,  
22 and risk of unexpected breakdowns. As facility maintenance tasks are pushed further  
23 out, the condition of that asset or part will continue to worsen. In the short-term, this

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for all students in North Dakota.*

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1 creates situations where unexpected breakdowns are more likely. Long-term, this can  
2 shorten an asset’s useful life, and require a renewal or replacement sooner than  
3 expected. There is also a cost benefit to consider when prioritizing deferred  
4 maintenance tasks. Proactively completing maintenance tasks is always less expensive  
5 than dealing with bigger issues later. However, how is a school able to do this at the  
6 appropriate level if they have no revenue stream dedicated to that? That is the purpose  
7 of this bill.

8 What is being asked for here is a very small levy authority, but it would account for the  
9 ability to fund a reasonable maintenance plan in a K12 school building in a district that  
10 has not been able to get levying authority into their building fund. In the senate, we  
11 heard another bill that didn’t take this approach but did address the incredible  
12 challenge that is in place in these schools that don’t have a fund. You may be surprised  
13 to know this is in communities that have readily voted to build a new building with  
14 over 60% voter approval but oddly enough will not approve a vote to keep the  
15 buildings in good condition at a vote of a simple majority.

16 We ask that the legislature consider this as a reasonable option to assist those  
17 remaining districts who need to be able to take care of their aging buildings. In the  
18 long run this wisdom will likely be a cost savings to communities and the local tax  
19 payer.

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