



**HB 1470**

January 31, 2023

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Chair and Members of the Committee: My name is Rylee Lindemann and I am the Vice-President of Governmental Affairs and I am here today in support of HB 1470

The North Dakota Student Association is a student organization established in 1969 dedicated to ensuring that students have a voice at the table in policy that affects Higher Education. We consist of delegates from each of the 11 public institutions meeting monthly to engage students in ND Higher Education policy. Our mission is to empower students, create collaboration between the student bodies of the North Dakota public universities, and to give a student perspective on higher education policy.

HB 1470 would have a positive impact on higher education in North Dakota. This bill funds an important grant to help assist people who started but did not finish college. Those who find themselves unable to finish their degree often find themselves in precarious financial situations. Lacking a college degree may negatively impact an individual or family financially, not only because having a degree often increases one's income but also because paying back loans is greatly impeded by that missing increase in income. As inflation continues to rise, and the cost of everyday items becomes increasingly more expensive, the percentage of income that becomes disposable shrinks. This has negative repercussions not only at the individual level but at the state level as well. North Dakotans who have not finished college and are spending large portions of their income on repaying loans for a degree they never finished, are not creating as much as an economic benefit as they could be. Rather than buying gas or supporting a local business,

students who did not finish school will prioritize paying back their loans. This results in the short circuiting of economic stimulus that otherwise would have occurred.

This bill is timely as well. After the COVID-19 pandemic forced many students across the state into less than favorable learning conditions, many students simply dropped out or decided to put their education on pause. HB 1470 would assist in providing those students with a financial incentive to return to school. In turn, these returning students would finally be able to finish their degree and thus provide the state with a huge return on investment by having a higher income to not only repay their loans but also to further contribute to our state's economy.

For students of higher education who have been knocked down, whether by covid or another reason, HB 1470 does not simply seek a return on investment, however. This bill may just be the thing to give student who second questioned their education the motivation to return.