

The reasons are many for the House Education Committee to recommend passage today of HB 1491. I will share three.

One, feeding our children is a basic fundamental priority. Last year, more than 47,000 North Dakota children were served through the Great Plains Food Bank and our network of charitable hunger relief programs. **47,000 children!** It is hard to come up with a single reason why a child in North Dakota needs to go hungry. Please support HB 1491 **today**.

Two, hungry children can't learn. Throughout my eight years of service on the Fargo Board of Education, I heard teachers, administrators and staff share data and stories of the challenges students face when they are hungry. They simply are not capable of growing and learning when they are hungry. The Great Plains Food Bank childhood hunger-relief programs – backpack, school pantry and youth summer meals– along with our network of 200 partner food pantries across the state are feeding kids every day **while they are home**. Solving childhood hunger requires partnerships and passage of HB 1491 will tell North Dakota children you know they don't need to go hungry **during the school day either**. Please join with the Great Plains Food Bank in our work to end hunger **together**. North Dakota children need you.

Three, the Great Plains Food Bank serves one in four children. HB 1491 goes beyond filling the tummies of our food-insecure children—it will help provide nourishment so they can grow and thrive and be the workforce, leaders, and community builders we need **tomorrow**. As we look at ways to incentivize employees and businesses to move to the state, and strive to build an even stronger workforce, add free student lunches into the mix of the many great reasons to be in North Dakota. At the Great Plains Food Bank, we believe that when you feed a child, you feed the future, and HB 1491 will feed North Dakota's future tenfold.

Thank you for your consideration and support of HB 1491.

Rebecca Knutson
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