

HD 1531
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Opposition

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House Bill 1531
North Dakota House Education Committee
Representative Heinert, Chairman
February 8th, 2023

Boozhoo, Hello, Chairman Heinert and members of the House of Education Committee,

My name is Jeryn Marcellais. I am a senior at Mayville State University pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Secondary English Education with a minor in Library, Media, and Information Science. I am a proud member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, and was born and raised on the Turtle Mountain Reservation. I am writing this testimony in complete opposition of HB 1531. As a student at Mayville State, I have been the recipient of the Diversity Waiver, the very thing this bill aims to eliminate.

For myself, the members of my tribe, members of other tribes in our great state of North Dakota, and the other demographics listed in this bill, educational waivers have helped make the dream of pursuing higher education an achievable reality. Educational waivers that this bill aims to abolish have an impact on one's choice to attend institutions of higher education. For myself personally, educational waivers make it possible for me to attend Mayville State, and make me feel that I am welcomed as a Native American woman on campus.

At Mayville State, the educational waiver has thus created the Intercultural and Diversity Club. For myself, as well as the members of this club, it has been a saving grace. It is a club where I get the opportunity to connect with other Native American students as well as minority and international students who have similar college experiences, unlike the majority. This club is open to all students, and provides opportunities of the enrichment of various cultures, both on campus and in the community of Mayville.

The passing of this bill would inhibit students like myself from attending higher education institutions. The idea that this bill is even proposed in the first place is a slap in the face, as I feel it is a ploy to hinder diverse students, both in our state and across the country, from attending institutions of higher education in North Dakota.

For these reasons, I highly encourage a "do not pass" on HB 1531.

Miigwetch, thank you.