

HB 1531  
2/8/23

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House Education Committee

February 8, 2023

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Chair Heinert and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Ryan Keel. I am a College Planning Specialist and have helped hundreds of families plan for and reduce the cost of a college education. I am painfully aware of the many barriers that prevent students from attending colleges and universities.

I would like to address three issues that relate to this proposed bill.

- 1) This would discourage many individuals from seeking an education in ND, and would directly impact important issues such as encouraging more women to become involved in STEM.
- 2) This sends a clear message to prospective students in and out of state, that North Dakota does not value diversity, nor does it think of higher education as a priority.
- 3) This goes directly against any programs or initiatives that are trying to recruit new talent from out of state to fill the many open jobs as well as help revitalize our small towns. This includes Gov. Burgum's Energizing Our Communities plan.

I'd also like to share from my personal experience as a College Planning Specialist. Within the last several years, I have worked for multiple families with conservative voting parents, who have children that would fall under the 'characteristics' of this bill. Those parents encouraged their students to attend a school out of state because they knew their child would be more welcome somewhere outside of North Dakota than they had been here. This bill will only encourage more behavior like this.

For these reasons, I strongly recommend a "Do Not Pass" on HB 1531