



Financial Aid Office

HB 1531

Representative Pat Heinert
House Education Committee
February 8th, 2023

Dear Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee, for the record, we are writing on behalf of students, faculty, and staff at Minot State University.

We are writing to express opposition to HB 1531 as it is currently amended to prohibit waiving of educational costs based on applicant's race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity or sexual preference.

Passage of this bill will have a direct impact on our ability to recruit, retain, and graduate underserved populations of students and will put Minot State University and the entire ND University System at a competitive disadvantage. Our ability to provide a Cultural Diversity Tuition Waiver program helps us provide educational opportunities to students who may not otherwise be considering pursuit of a college degree. Approximately fifty-five to sixty-five students benefit from the Cultural Diversity Waiver each year.

HB 1531 also puts the future of the ND Indian Scholarship in jeopardy. The ND Indian Scholarship provides critical direct financial assistance to Native American students based on merit and financial need. The elimination of this vital program will have a direct impact on our Native American students' ability to complete their degrees. Nearly twenty-five students receive assistance from the ND Indian Scholarship each year.

Additionally, HB 1531 has the potential to put Minot State in a problematic situation regarding our existing scholarship endowment agreements created with donor intentions to give preference to various groups of students based on gender or ethnic background.

Ultimately, HB 1531 will hurt students who rely on these programs to help them finance their education at Minot State University.

Please consider voting no on HB 1531. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Laurie Weber, Financial Aid Director

Annette Mennem, Native American Cultural Center Director

Dr. Laurie Geller, Vice President for Academic Affairs

Brent Winiger, Vice President for Administration and Finance

Kevin Harmon, Vice President for Student Affairs