

Chair Heinert and members of the House Education Committee. We are submitting this testimony in opposition to HB 1531.

Please vote 'do not pass' on HB 1531. Given the extremely limited time we've had to collect numbers that would reflect how devastating the impact of that bill would be, please realize that the below statistics would constitute only the tip of the economic iceberg the bill would ram our ship of state into. Besides losing the additional revenue beyond waivers from the students who would be impacted for sure, as well as the economic benefit they and their visiting parents bring to our communities, the impact on enrollment and funding formula for VCSU, and the cascading impacts that would have on Valley City and Barnes County would be devastating.

We would be happy to gather specific details of the impact, but due to the short response time, we have not gathered that information. VCSU currently enrolls 102 students who would be affected by this bill.

Beyond the pure economics of the bill, the bill and the amendments in question would undermine much of what we as an institution of higher education believe in as the role of higher education, i.e., that access to a reasonably-priced public education is part and parcel of the American experience, and that decreasing access for some runs counter to what we as a country, and North Dakota as a state, have historically been about.

We work hard to bring a diverse range of students into our state knowing that diversity is the lifeblood for progress and healthy communities. This bill would radically undermine that work, staunch that flow, and bring the growth and progress we've worked so hard for for so many years to a shuddering halt if not worse. North Dakotans want to grow, we want North Dakota to grow, this bill would actively and negatively impact all we've worked so hard to accomplish for our state. Please vote 'do not pass' on HB 1531.

Respectfully,

Larry Brooks, Vice President for Academic Affairs
Erin Klingenberg, PhD, Vice President for Student Affairs
Rachelle Hunt, PhD, CCF Faculty Representative