



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

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

My name is David Cook, and I am the president of North Dakota State University. I am submitting this written testimony in opposition to the proposed amendment to HB1351.

The State Board of Higher Education's policy 820 reads, in part:

[I]nstitutions may provide for additional waiver of tuition and fees. Institutions are encouraged to use this authority to promote enrollment of a culturally diverse student body, including members of Indian tribes and economically disadvantaged students, for the benefit of all students and the academic community, to promote enrollment of graduate students and research, and for other purposes consistent with an institution's mission. Institutions may grant partial waivers or waive non-resident or resident tuition.

In response to this encouragement by the State Board of Higher Education, NDSU offers a limited number of cultural diversity tuition waivers and international student waivers. These awards provide a partial, not full, waiver of tuition and are designed to help NDSU's enrollment efforts, which in turn, helps the state with its workforce shortage.

As the state's land-grant institution, NDSU is obligated to serve the state by aligning its operations with the state's needs, and we consistently hear from both business leaders and government officials about the state's workforce shortage. NDSU helps reduce this shortage by retaining North Dakota high school graduates and recruiting top-notch out-of-state students. However, in order to do this, we need to have as many tools in the toolbox as we can, and these diversity waivers and international scholarships are important tools for our enrollment efforts.

Eliminating the waiver would reduce our ability to recruit undergraduate students. According to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, the only population of high school graduates expected to grow for at least the next 13 years are students from under-represented groups. The number of white, non-Hispanic high school graduates has been declining since 2008. This is leading to greater competition for diverse students. Tuition waivers allow us to better recruit eligible students, and many of our graduates accept their first jobs in North Dakota.

In addition, international students are also recruited globally, and waivers provide a necessary recruiting tool as cost of attendance is often a deciding factor. Of particular importance is the fact that international students enroll disproportionately in STEM fields, which is exactly what our state leaders and business leaders need from NDSU.

In the end, I ask myself whether a proposed law makes it easier or harder for NDSU to help the state alleviate its workforce shortage. This amendment would make it harder, and I ask that it not be adopted. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D. Cook". The "D" is large and stylized, with a vertical line through it. The "C" and "K" are also stylized and connected to the "D".

David Cook