

**Faith Wahl** | UND Student Body President  
[Faith.wahl@und.edu](mailto:Faith.wahl@und.edu) | 701.426.9123

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Faith Wahl, and I serve as the Student Body President at the University of North Dakota (UND). I am providing testimony in support of SB 2197, relating to the re-energize North Dakota Scholarship.

SB 2197 seeks to award scholarships to students to help recruit and retrain to work in North Dakota in the oil and gas industry. This scholarship not only helps make education more affordable for students but addresses a key workforce shortage in the state. According to the Director of the Department of Mineral Resources, Lynn Helms, North Dakota is “going into 2023 with a serious workforce shortage” [1] in the oil and gas industry. On a national level, North Dakota continues to be one of the top competitors in the oil and gas industry, but still faces workforce challenges as “the number one barrier” to adding drilling and frack crews throughout the state [2]. Furthermore, SB 2197 directs higher education institutions like the University of North Dakota to prioritize key workforce areas throughout the state and direct resources and personnel to addressing those shortages.

Beyond helping to address a need for an industry that produces a significant amount of revenue for the state, SB 2197 includes financial awards that would help decrease barriers to higher education in North Dakota. As an unprecedented inflation rate ripples across the nation, higher education students are faced with the decision on whether to continue their education or prioritize other basic needs such as food, electricity, transportation, and housing. According to Section 1.6 of SB 2197, a student could receive up to \$1,500 per semester or \$3,000 per year under the re-energize North Dakota scholarship. If passed, this program would serve as a competitive advantage for North Dakota as surrounding states seek to attract those same students to their respective programs and industries. The re-energize North Dakota scholarship would also benefit UND in particular based on the unique education opportunities provided by the Energy & Environmental Research Center (EERC). Combining the scholarship program outlined in SB

2197 with the innovative energy programs that UND offers will help recruit students to North Dakota, provide them with a quality education, and encourage them to build their lives and families throughout the state.

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education committee, I respectfully request a **DO PASS on SB 2197**. Thank you for your time, and I am available to answer any questions that you might have.

Respectfully submitted,

*Faith Wahl*

UND Student Body President