

March 6, 2023

Re: Testimony in support of SB 2288

Dear Chairman Heinert, Vice Chair Schreiber-Beck, and members of the Education Committee,

I'm Dr. Beth Sanford, President-Elect of the North Dakota Nurses Association and a member of the Nursing Recruitment and Retention committee, comprised of members of other state nursing associations.

We are bringing forward this bill SB2288, regarding the funding of a Nursing-Only Challenge grant, as an immediate strategy to support the building of North Dakota's nursing workforce to meet staffing demands.

As you may be familiar, higher education challenge grants incentivize benefactors to show a return on investment with a 50% match from the state. Higher education grants can support:

- Nursing Education Endowments, which produce a sustainable model for nursing scholarships.
  - Scholarships support student decision-making to pursue nursing as a profession.
- Educational informatics infrastructure providing matching grants for high-dollar lab and informatics equipment for providers of nursing education.

This bill as amended in the Senate allows for a nursing-only challenge grant and amendment for a verbiage change for nursing to say, "providers of nursing education" to include additional providers of nursing education with our many private institutions and allow for future options for Career and Technical Education partnerships.

Some communities may choose to pursue an innovative program to offer a Practical Nursing certificate as part of a higher education/Career and Technical Education partnership program. Key stakeholders are looking at options that meet North Dakota Century Code requirements in building such partnerships, which would have to meet licensure requirements for both the Board of Nursing and secondary education.

Similar programs already exist across the US, allowing students to complete/begin a practical nursing degree (typically 1-2 years) in high school. Research shows such programs in other states, for LPN (WI, NY, LA) and EMT (Minnesota), retain talent in the local community.

The profession of nursing needs to do something drastic now to encourage North Dakota residents and residents of other states to enter the profession and choose to live and work in North Dakota.

A nursing-only challenge grant would entice benefactors by stretching their dollars further when donating to nursing education in North Dakota and allow providers of nursing education to expand programs to meet the needs of the workforce in 2023 in creative and innovative ways.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Can I answer any questions?

Beth Sanford, DNP, MSN, RN, ACN, CLC

President-Elect of the North Dakota Nurses Association