



HB 1406

House Human Services Committee

January 23, 2023

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Chair Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee. My name is Katie Fitzsimmons, and I serve as the Director of Student Affairs for the North Dakota University System. I am here today on behalf of the North Dakota University System and its eleven institutions to provide **neutral** testimony related to HB 1406, provide consideration for an amendment, and enlighten the committee about the current process used throughout the North Dakota University System.

Currently, with respect to vaccination data, the eleven campuses engage in a process to obtain sufficient records to ensure the safety of all students on campus in the event of an outbreak. Providing proof of vaccination is not required. Students are given two options: 1) Provide MMR and meningitis vaccination record to the campus OR 2) Complete the immunization exemption form and decline to provide records to the campus.

Option two is for students who prefer to not disclose whether or not they have received vaccinations. We do not ask why a student is requesting an exemption; we simply ask so we know the possible impact of an outbreak, should one occur on our campus or community. If an outbreak were to occur, the students who exempted from the requirement would be considered not vaccinated. As such, those students might not be allowed to attend classes in person or live on campus until the threat of disease is no longer present.

We do not require any vaccination information from faculty, staff, or visitors to our campuses. However, if a faculty or staff member chooses to enroll in a course and attend it in person, they must also provide records or complete the exemption form.

The proposed changes in section two of the bill would not allow the campuses to collect any vaccination data. This could present challenges if an outbreak were to occur. If this bill moves forward, the North Dakota University System requests an indemnification clause to lift the liability of severe injury, loss of access to education, and/or death if such circumstances were encountered due to a case of measles, mumps, rubella, or meningitis. Our concern lies in the ability to rapidly respond to possible cases of disease and we feel equipped to do so under our current process.

This concludes my testimony related to HB 1406. I respectfully request consideration of our amendment suggestion. If the committee finds that acceptable, I will gladly work with the clerk and Legislative Council to draft such an amendment. I stand for questions from Committee members.