



# North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association

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## Testimony of Laura Beaudoin, Veterinarian In Support of HB 1003 March 8, 2023

Chairman Sorvaag and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee- Education and Environment Division:

I am Dr. Laura Beaudoin, and I am an associate veterinarian at All Pets Veterinary Clinic in Bismarck. As a former PSEP recipient, I'd like to voice support of HB 1003, specifically the funding for the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP). I also am voicing support for PSEP funding on behalf of the North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association.

PSEP funding is vital for veterinary medicine for the following reasons:

- 1) **PSEP provides a level playing field for North Dakota students to have access to veterinary medicine programs.** PSEP enables students to enroll in academic programs not available in North Dakota and receive financial aid to cover the extra cost of out-of-state tuition. Veterinary medicine is one of these programs, an occupation that is essential to North Dakota, yet not offered by any of our educational institutions.
  - 85% of North Dakota veterinary medicine students utilize PSEP; without access to PSEP veterinary medicine programs the number of ND students becoming veterinarians would be compromised. (PSEP supports up to 12 vet med students/year).
- 2) **PSEP provides vital funding to help offset some of the non-resident tuition costs.** Most of North Dakota's veterinary medicine students are charged twice the amount for tuition costs compared to tuition costs for residents of a respective State.
  - I.e., non-resident tuition costs \$58,777/year vs. resident tuition costs \$27,879/year
  - PSEP provides financial support ranging from 25% to 50% of the "non-resident" tuition costs for a ND veterinary medicine student.
- 3) **The debt-to-income ratio is increasing steadily each year for veterinary medicine graduates. PSEP funding provides viability for students to pursue veterinary medicine.**
  - On average, student debt for veterinary medicine students has increased each year by \$3,199 due to rising tuition fees. New graduate salaries are not increasing proportionally.
  - In 2021, 84% of veterinary medicine new graduates had a mean debt of \$186,430.
  - Starting salaries for veterinarians are disproportionate across work sectors with the highest mean salary at \$103,881 (companion animal practice) to the lowest mean salary at \$54,539 (equine practice). The debt-to-income ratio continues to be of concern.

As a former recipient, I can provide a first-hand testament to the value of the program and how it allowed me to pursue a career in veterinary medicine.

This program allows North Dakota students, like myself, to be able to pursue a career while not saddling us with the extreme costs of out-of-state tuition. Without PSEP, out-of-state veterinary education costs could prohibit North Dakota students from considering it as a viable career option. After my parents and I crunched the numbers when I was applying to veterinary colleges, I turned down an offer of an out-of-state slot at Colorado State University because I knew I wouldn't be able to make enough money as a large animal veterinarian in ND to be able to make minimum loan payments. I was forced to consider pursuing a different career altogether or take the slot knowing I wasn't going to be able to return home. Thankfully, my story has a happy ending, I ended up qualifying for a PSEP slot and was able to return to North Dakota four years later and start my career as a mixed animal veterinarian.

PSEP is important in supporting our students in their education by providing the opportunity to study programs that aren't offered at North Dakota colleges. PSEP is instrumental in keeping education costs reasonable for our students which will allow veterinarians to return to ND to practice instead of forcing them to look for more lucrative jobs around the nation just to be able to make their loan payments. Finally, PSEP shows support for the ND veterinary industry by encouraging students along this career path when they may otherwise defer to human medicine, pharmacy or other science and agriculture related programs.

Thank you for your continued support of PSEP funding as well as the opportunity to address the committee and express support for HB 1003.