

NDSU NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Good morning Chairman Sorvaag and members of the Senate Education and Environment Committee.

My name is Charys Kunkel. I live in New Salem, ND and am the Director of NDSU Nursing at Sanford Health in Bismarck. I am also speaking on behalf of Carla Gross, Associate Dean for the NDSU School of Nursing in Fargo who is attending virtually. We are testifying in support of Senate bill 2288 which will award matching funds to nursing programs for projects that advance nursing education.

Nursing education serves as the pipeline to meet nursing workforce needs. As you are all well aware, there is a critical nursing shortage that is expected to escalate in the years to come. The fact that there is a critical shortage of nursing faculty who are retiring and leaving the field, escalates the critical nursing shortage further. Nursing programs in North Dakota have expanded enrollments over the past ten years, even though our budgets have not expanded to match. In addition, costs of simulation labs and equipment have increased substantially over the past ten years. Simulation is used to supplement clinical experiences, offering students a safe place to practice nursing skills and exposure to common, complex, clinical experiences.

This bill will support nursing programs with funding to meet critical needs in nursing education or to expand their programs. As a land grant university, NDSU is committed to working to meet the workforce needs of the state. Since 2015, NDSU has expanded our Pre-Licensure BSN program, doubling the number of students admitted in Fargo. We've added a site in Bismarck in an effort to meet the healthcare needs in western North Dakota. We have added a RN to BSN online program to advance nursing knowledge and have established a highly respected online LPN to BSN program. Both of these online programs meet the needs of place bound students, often in rural or underserved areas. In addition, we have a Family Nurse Practitioner program that is offered in Fargo and Bismarck. NDSU had secured past grants aimed at placing FNP students in rural areas for practicum experiences in an effort to increase the supply of advance care providers in these areas. Our current HRSA grant provides Family Nurse Practitioners with a residency program that gives them advanced skills that are needed to provide care in rural areas such as elevated skills in primary and emergent care settings where they are independent providers. The NDSU School of Nursing is committed to continue exploring new programs or projects that will increase enrollment capacity and recruitment efforts to educate excellent nurses who are practice ready.

With all due respect, we ask you to vote in favor of this bill. The funding will provide support to nursing programs across the state that are educating future nurses.

This concludes our testimony,

Charys Kunkel, Director of NDSU Nursing at Sanford

Carla Gross, Associate Dean, NDSU School of Nursing

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