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HB 1259
Senate Education
March 13, 2023
Testimony of Alexis Baxley

Good afternoon, Chairman Elkin, and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Alexis Baxley, and I serve as the executive director of the North Dakota School Boards Association. NDSBA represents the elected school boards of all 170 public school districts and several special education units in North Dakota.

NDSBA stands in support of HB 1259. The ability to staff temporary grant or other short-term positions without worrying about continuing contract rights will allow my school districts to better serve their students and ensure temporary funds are used as effectively as possible. My office fielded many questions from districts looking to use their ESSER dollars to hire additional staff in an attempt to address COVID-related learning loss. Many were nervous to do so, afraid that continuing contract requirements would end up affecting their current staff when ESSER funds ran out. It was a valid concern. HB 1259 would help address these concerns.

Additionally, we have had districts who have hired teachers to specific, short-term contracts for temporary programs in the past. When it came time to terminate the program and the contract, districts ended up being forced to do a RIF, and potentially had to let staff go that they would have preferred to stay rather than the individual who knowingly accepted a short-term position.

I respectfully encourage you to give this bill a do-pass recommendation, and I will stand for any questions.