



HB 1305

March 3rd, 2023

Jason Fincel, North Dakota Student Association

(605) 290-2722 | Jason.fincel@ndus.edu

Chair Elkin and Members of the Committee: My name is Jason Fincel and I am the Chief Administrator of the North Dakota Student Association. I am here today in support of HB 1305.

The North Dakota Student Association is dedicated to ensuring that students have a voice at the table in policy that affects higher education. We consist of delegates from each of the 11 public North Dakota University System (NDUS) institutions, meeting monthly to engage students in discussions about North Dakota higher education policy. Since 1969, our mission has been to empower students, create collaboration between the student bodies of the North Dakota public universities, and to provide a student perspective on higher education policy.

The North Dakota Student Association serves as a means for students to speak as a unified and collective body on matters that pertain to them. In pursuit of that objective, the NDSA passed a resolution on Saturday, November 5th, 2022, NDSA-09-2223: A Resolution in Support of the NDSA's Legislative Priorities for the 23-25 Biennium. One of the priorities that are enumerated by the resolution is the increase of access to financial aid for NDUS students. Moreover, the North Dakota Student Association passed NDSA-08-2223: A Resolution in Support of NDUS Scholarships on Saturday, November 5th, 2022. This resolution states that the NDSA recognizes how scholarships and grants significantly ease the financial burden of students seeking a quality education. Finally, NDSA also passed NDSA-12-2223: A Resolution in Support of HB 1003: Higher Education Budget Allocation for the 23-25 Biennium on Saturday, January 21st, 2023. This resolution was based on the notion that NDSA supports the increased ability of NDUS students to have access to a competitive, affordable and valuable higher education degree which will increase the quality of the workforce of the state of North Dakota.

House Bill No. 1305 expands access to the North Dakota Scholarship, which increases the ability of students in higher education in the state of North Dakota to pay for their education.

Scholarships are a significant part of how students pay for their college education and by expanding access to the North Dakota Scholarship to a larger share of students, the financial burden of higher education will be reduced for many. This will not only help students who are already attending North Dakota schools, it will also attract students from out of state who are looking for affordable and quality higher education. North Dakota is in an advantageous position to attract students from across the region and the country. Providing financial aid to students increases that advantage. Affordable education is in the best interest of both the state of North Dakota and the students who reside there. On behalf of the North Dakota Student Association, I urge the committee to provide a DO PASS recommendation on House Bill No. 1035.