



North Dakota Native Vote
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Statement of Sharnell Seaboy regarding HB 1491
Field Organizer at North Dakota Native Vote
March 15, 2023
House Education Committee

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Sharnell Seaboy. I am an enrolled citizen of the Mni Wakan Oyate (Spirit Lake Nation) and I am a Field Organizer at North Dakota Native Vote. We are here to testify in support of HB 1491.

North Dakota Native Vote is a non-partisan grassroots organization. Our mission is to create and affect policy to promote equitable representation for the Native people of North Dakota.

We have a few key points that we would like to present to the committee today:

- First, the impacts of today's inflation rate and the continued rising cost of living is contributing to more families struggling to make ends meet. In some of our communities in North Dakota, low income households are feeling the burden of housing and food costs. Many of these families are those who do not currently qualify for free and reduced meals. Eliminating that barrier for families would help with food insecurity many students experience.
- Second, it is mandatory for children to be in school for up to 7 hours per day. During a school day there are two meal times. Providing nutritious meals for all students will enhance learning and academic achievement. Why are we not investing in our future law makers, doctors, and educators of North Dakota?
- Finally, The passage of this bill will help create opportunities for farm to school food cooperation to provide locally grown food to students in North Dakota.

Regardless of income, North Dakota Native Vote believes that providing every student with a nutritious free meal at school is the right thing to do. Therefore, North Dakota Native Vote recommends a DO PASS on HB 1491.

Pidamiya-ye (Thank you).