

**Testimony of Lunch Aid, North Dakota
In Support of HB 1491 and HB 1494
January 29, 2023**

Greetings North Dakota Legislators,

We write to you in our capacity as the cofounders of Lunch Aid, North Dakota. We are in very strong support of Universal Hot Lunch for all North Dakota k-12 public school students (HB 1491). We would also like to strongly encourage you to vote in favor of ending all lunch-shaming practices that stigmatize already vulnerable students with cruel practices such as turning them over to collections for unpaid lunch debt (HB 1494).

(1491) There are several reasons to provide a no-cost school lunch to all students.

(1) First and foremost, students learn better when their stomachs are nonempty. There is an abundance of research proving this fact.

(2) We provide critical infrastructure as part of required enrollment in a public school such as desks, books, and sometimes a tablet or laptop. Certainly, we can go the extra distance to provide the most fundamental tool for learning, good nutrition.

(3) Universal hot lunch will attract a desperately needed workforce. We need people to move here instead of MT, SD, or MN. And we need people to stay.

(4) This bill has bipartisan support among the PEOPLE of North Dakota. Let us act on the issues where we are in agreement. We can be a leader and a great example for the rest of the United States

(5) THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA CAN AFFORD IT. A small portion of The Legacy Fund can be used to pay for all of this in perpetuity with a properly managed endowment.

(1494) The reason to pass anti-shaming policies is because it is the right thing to do and it costs the tax payers nothing. Turning people over to collections is ineffective. There is research to show that this punitive measure returns an insignificant portion of lost revenue.

I believe that the state of North Dakota and its legislative representatives have the will, the kindness, and the good sense to pass these two bills. Thank you for your consideration. Please vote in favor of HB 1491 and 1494.

Best Regards,

Jason and Kari Boynton

Lunch Aid, North Dakota