

**Testimony Senate Bill 2249**  
**Senate Workforce Development Committee**  
**Education Standards and Practice Board**

Good morning Chairman Wobbema and members of the Committee. I am Rebecca Pitkin, Executive Director of the Education Standards and Practices Board. I am here to testify in opposition to SB 2249, a bill to centralize administration of occupational boards. The current teacher shortage would most likely be increased if this bill passed, removing the administration of teacher license from a staff which is trained in the functions and requirements of the profession with a 10-member practitioner board. In 1995, ESPB became an independent board separate from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), with responsibility for teacher licensure, teacher education program approval, professional development, and professional practices. As an independent board it carries out its duties funded by the licensure fees from the educators in North Dakota and does not receive state appropriations. ESPB issues over 12,000 teacher licenses each year and there are over 18,000 licensed teachers. Our license system is electronic and houses transcripts and required reeducation credits. Our license processing time is days, and sometimes hours once we receive needed materials and an individual's BCI/FBI background check. Our staff, several of whom were teachers and administrators themselves and understand qualifications, work closely with schools to ensure all employees are appropriately licensed. Our Out of State Educator License (OSEL) process ensures a smooth and timely transition if an applicant has a valid and unencumbered license in another state. Our current 30-year license recognizes long-practicing professional with no additional reeducation credit requirements. ESPB has smooth and time-tested processes for all elements of SB 2249 and satisfaction surveys collected over the past six years indicate applicants are overwhelmingly satisfied with our services. The Education Standards and Practices Board respectfully requests a DO NOT PASS on SB 2249. Thank you for allowing me to share the Board's concerns. I am willing to answer any questions relating to my testimony.

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