

Testimony on SB 2287
Senate Industry and Business Committee
January 10, 2023

Good morning, Senator Wobbema of the Senate Workforce Development Committee. My name is Bonnie Vangerud, Vice Chair of the North Dakota Organization of Nurse Leaders. NDONL represents both critical access as well as acute care hospitals across North Dakota. We are here to support SB 2287 relating to the health care professional student loan repayment program; and to provide an appropriation. We appreciate Senator K. Roers and K. Hogan as well as other bill co-sponsors in bringing this issue forward.

NDONL is supportive of having a student loan repayment bill.

Currently, there are numerous shortages of healthcare workers throughout the state ND. Many staff have been leaving their current employer to become a travel nurse as the pay is higher. You also may have heard that MN had a wage increase of nursing staff of 18% and with Fargo being a boarder city we could easily lose ND nurses to MN.

The loan repayment could really help recruit and retain nurses. There is a crisis for nurses across the spectrum in ND (urban and rural). We encourage this bill to be open to all healthcare organizations and Registered Nurses (new hires as well as current full time staff who have student loans) who work within the state of North Dakota.

SB 2287 has been drafted to create another way to recruit and retain nurses throughout the state by:

- Providing loan repayment up to 4,000 per year or 20,000 in 5 years – this could help stabilize the work environment
- This would allow staff more income to live and stay in their current work environment

We envision the loan repayment to help recruit, retain and stabilize the work force as well as recognize staff that have continued to work in their positions and organizations, as we want this to continue.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.

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