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Testimony in Support of SB 2287  
Senate Workforce Development Committee

January 26, 2023

Chairman Wobbema and Senate Workforce Development Committee Members:

Good morning. My name is Sherri Miller. I would like to address you today in support of SB 2287. I am representing a part of the healthcare team that makes up the largest group of professionals, nurses. I have been a registered nurse in North Dakota for 24 years. I am also the Executive Director for the North Dakota Nurses Association. The NDNA is the only professional organization representing all nurses in North Dakota. Part of our mission is to advance the nursing profession by promoting the professional development of nurses and to advocate on health care issues affecting nurses and the public. Right now, we are actively advocating for the nursing workforce with recruitment and retention tactics.

North Dakota and the nation have been facing a shortage for many years, and it is only getting worse. According to a study published in the *National Library of Medicine*, there are many factors contributing to the nursing shortage, including:

- Lack of educators and schooling - nursing school enrollment hasn't kept up with the pace of projected demand. There is also a lack in the necessary number of nursing school faculty members. Without enough teachers, we don't have enough nurses caring for patients.
- High turnover rate - oftentimes due to burnout
- An aging workforce - over half of the RN workforce is currently over 50 years old. There is also a need for more healthcare as the population will need services as well.

Thankfully, many students in North Dakota are working hard to obtain their Associate or Bachelor of Science in nursing degrees with the intent to stay and work here. However, after their student loans and scholarships, they typically have a sizable debt. They often look out of state or take travel nursing positions to make a higher wage and more quickly pay off their debts. Senate Bill 2287 could allow nurses like these to get a break on their large student loans and could provide an incentive to stay and work in ND and not do travel nursing. They can even further their education to work as nursing educators.

We respectfully ask you to pass SB 2287, loan repayment for registered nurses.

This concludes my testimony.

Thank you,

Sherri Miller, BS, BSN, RN  
Executive Director  
North Dakota Nurses Association