SB 2337
Senate Workforce Development Committee
Testimony of
ND Board of Nursing

Members of the Senate Workforce Committee. My name is Kyle Martin, Associate Director for Operations at the NDBON. This testimony has been prepared in opposition to SB 2337. Please consider the following key operational considerations and the need for the Board of Nursing to continue using its own designated administrative support team and technology to maintain core operations to ensure safe and timely licensing of nursing professionals across North Dakota:

- This legislative session, the NDBON has proposed a framework for an Alternative to Discipline Program for nurses. However, the proposed program structure would not be possible under a uniform board model and would require outsourcing, at an estimated cost of $250,000 annually.

- The Board issues 90-day temporary permits that can be issued within one to two business days (an exception, not norm in the United States). There are currently 118 nurses working on temporary permits in the state. Full licensure can occur within one to two days of receiving all licensure requirements.

- The licensure process can be complex, but the Board's highly trained licensing specialists work closely with applicants to assure timely completion of applications. The team is trained to review applications and their supporting documents to safeguard against fraud and to provide expedited, accurate processing. Each application is reviewed by a director and licensing specialists throughout the process.

- Training a new NDBON team member to become competent in licensing takes on average 12-18 months.

- Between October 2022 through January 2023, the Board received 21,445 emails and notifications related to applications and licensure.

- In FY 21-22, the Board licensing team processed 9,454 renewal applications, 1,964 initial (new) LPN/RN licenses, 399 initial APRN licenses, 243 initial UAP applications, and completed 2,828 criminal history record checks.

- The Board utilizes a unique software solution since 2014 to power its website and database to meet its complex licensure needs. To date, the database houses 77,032 unique records which are shared with NCSBN's national database for cross-data and licensure collaboration. This platform has been tailored with unique algorithms to prompt users with specific questions based on their unique licensing circumstances to determine licensure eligibility.

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- The North Dakota Board of Nursing utilizes private-sector vendors to provide information technology, network security and telecommunication services. Previously, the Board utilized NDIT for telecommunication support. In one outage instance, our office was told by NDIT the problem could not be worked on for 14 days. Our current vendors can provide outage service in less than one-hour.

Other important considerations related to the important work done by the NDBON locally and nationally:

- The NDBON has repeatedly demonstrated leadership and commitment to public safety, including active involvement and collaborations with state and national initiatives including, the ND tri-regulator collaborative with the Board of Medicine and Board of Pharmacy, the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Advisory Council, the Governors Workforce Shortage Taskforce and Opioid State of Emergency, the ND Hospital Association Workforce taskforce.

- The NDBON was honored to receive the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) Regulatory Achievement Award in both 2013 and 2022. The designation is awarded annually to one of 57 boards nationally for significant and outstanding contributions in nursing regulation.

- The Board participates in the National Council for State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) and is a member of the 39 state Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC). The NLC allows nurses who hold a multistate license to practice in other compact states. NDBON staff are trained on how/when to issue compact licenses and how to use NCSBN's cross-collaborative online tools that play a critical role in day-to-day licensing.

- The compliance division investigates potential violation reports (PVRs) or complaints against nurses to assure public safety. The average time from complaint to resolution is only 40-43 days. The division received 229 PVRs in FY 21-22 and typically has 25-35 open investigations at any time.

- The practice division works closely with organizations and individuals to assure that nurses are practicing within their scope of practice, provides education and also works with nurses who self-report criminal offenses, substance use disorders, and mental health or physical disorders to assure they are completing court ordered or healthcare professional requirements.