



Great Public Schools

Great Public Service

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**Testimony Before the House Education Committee  
HB 1100  
January 14, 2024**

Chair Heinert and members of the Committee, for the record, my name is Nick Archuleta, president of North Dakota United, and I rise today to urge a ***Do Pass*** recommendation for HB 1100.

Members of the Committee, HB 1100 quite simply allows for the reimbursement to school districts for delinquent school meal debt. Should HB 1100 become law, school districts will have less anxiety about delinquent meal debt and the strains that debt imposes on their budgets and the legislature will get a detailed report as to the extent of the delinquent meal debt issue that will serve to inform future actions by future legislatures.

The vexing aspect of school lunch debt, though, Mr. Chair, is that once the debt is eliminated, a new delinquent lunch debt will take its place. At ND United, we have been supporting Lunch Aid, a celebration of music started by one of our higher education members with the sole purpose of raising money to help eliminate lunch debt for Fargo area school children. The organizer of this event, Dr. Jason Boynton- a gifted Mathematics professor at NDSU and a fine bass player- conceived the idea and notes that unless something more permanent is done, we will be dealing with school lunch debt every year.

I believe the ultimate solution is that our state, which enforces compulsory school attendance, should provide school lunches given that hungry kids are kids not focused on learning. Incidentally, the provision of free universal school lunches is a concept embraced by 79% of North Dakotans. But that is another bill for another day.

With that, Chair Heinert, and members of the Committee, I will conclude my testimony and encourage a ***Do Pass*** recommendation for HB 1100.