



North Dakota Small Organized Schools

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Testimony in Support of HB 1100

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee. I am writing in support of HB 1100 to allocate \$6,000,000 to address school district delinquent meal debt and provide a report to legislative management. Access to nutritious meals is fundamental to the well-being and academic success of our students. For many children, the meals they receive at school are their most reliable source of nourishment. Without this support, students from families facing financial hardship often go hungry, impacting their ability to focus, learn, and achieve their full potential. By addressing delinquent meal debt, we ensure that no student in North Dakota is stigmatized or denied access to the nutrition they need to thrive.

Delinquent meal debt is not merely a financial issue—it is a humanitarian one. It reflects the economic struggles of some of our families across the state and places undue stress on school districts already managing tight budgets. This grant would alleviate financial pressures on schools while ensuring that children are treated with dignity and compassion. Furthermore, it sends a powerful message that North Dakota prioritizes the health and future of its youth, recognizing that no child should bear the burden of unpaid meal debts.

Investing in school nutrition is an investment in North Dakota’s future. Research shows that students who have consistent access to nutritious meals perform better academically, have fewer behavioral issues, and experience improved overall health. This funding would directly benefit our state by fostering a more equitable learning environment and promoting long-term success for our children. I urge you to support this vital legislation to address delinquent meal debt and affirm our commitment to the well-being of North Dakota’s students. This is a step in the right direction and perhaps to a time when school lunches are free to all students. Thank you for your consideration and for championing policies that uplift our children and communities.

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