

Chairman Heinert, and members of the House Education Committee, I am Dr. Samantha Bryans, Dean of Academics for Bishop Ryan Catholic School in Minot. I appear before you in support of House Bill No. 1200, which was introduced at the department's request.

On January 31, 2024, one of our seniors, Tyanna Weeks, was driving home from her shift at Trinity Hospital when a person under the influence of drugs and alcohol hit her vehicle. Tyanna suffered life-threatening injuries, and she was unable to return to school before graduation. After the crash, Tyanna spent three months at Craig Hospital in the Denver suburb of Englewood, Colorado. Craig Hospital specializes in brain injuries and neuro-rehabilitation. Tyanna had a collapsed lung, broken femur, broken ulnar, many facial fractures, and a traumatic brain injury. She was in a coma for two weeks and on life-support for three weeks. It was 1.5 months before she learned to communicate and eight weeks before she could eat solid food. It took four months for her to regain bodily functions and five months before she could walk again.

The Education Department at Craig Hospital worked alongside myself, our principal, and our teachers to ensure she completed her coursework to graduate on time. While Tyanna had a full 7 course schedule, she only needed a half unit of Economics to meet graduation requirements. While Tyanna was in a coma, I called DPI to see what we could do in order for her to graduate. I was told that Century Code stated that the graduation requirements needed to be met or she would not graduate and there wasn't any way around her graduating without finishing economics. Therefore, our econ teacher, myself, and my principal worked diligently alongside the education department at Craig Hospital to ensure that they were teaching the material to her and using head nods, lifting of fingers, and so on to answer the questions on assignments and tests. Before transferring to another facility in Nebraska, Tyanna was given a graduation ceremony by our school principal, president, family, and friends. With assistance, she walked across the bridge hallway of Craig Hospital to receive her diploma.

Prior to the crash, Tyanna was on pace to graduate at the top of her class with a 4.06 GPA and worked hard to graduate with 9 college credits—a number that would have been 15 if it weren't for the accident. She is a gifted young lady who prioritizes academics and other facets of her well-being that influence her quality of life. She is driven, smart, and inclined to be the best version of herself at all times. Tyanna was a member of the Bishop Ryan Catholic School chapter of the National Honor Society, a member of the Student Council, an Assistant Chaplain, and participated in various sports. Before her senior year, she sought dual credit courses to help her reach her goal of working in the medical field and attending the University of Mary. She could deliberate competently, set goals, and execute the discipline required to reach them.

Instead of attending the University of Mary, she is home rehabilitating her limbs and cognitive functions and coming to a sense of peace with the trajectory of her life post-graduation. Tyanna was fortunate to have school, family, and hospital staff who were by her side as she completed the necessary coursework to graduate on time despite her life-threatening injuries. Passing House Bill No. 1200 would allow students in emergent situations to fulfill required coursework under Section 15.1-21-02.2 with an alternate course. This bill would have allowed Tyanna to complete a course or course work alternative to Economics that would have eased the burden of completing rigorous work in her condition. Education is a fundamental right, and emergent

situations shouldn't keep students like Tyanna from graduating on time despite their hard work, docility, and courage to keep persevering through adversity toward post-secondary goals.