



HB 1221

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Sammi Weber, North Dakota Student Association

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Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sammi Weber, and I am the President of the North Dakota Student Association. I am writing to express my support for HB 1221.

The North Dakota Student Association (NDSA) is a student organization established in 1969 that is dedicated to ensuring that students have a voice in policy that affects Higher Education. The NDSA consists of delegates from each of the 11 public institutions that meet monthly to engage students in Higher Education policy in North Dakota. Our mission is to empower students, foster collaboration between students across campuses in the North Dakota University System (NDUS), and to advocate on issues of higher education in support of access, affordability, quality, and the student experience.

The \$24,000,000 allocated by HB 1221 will play a critical role in ensuring that the NDUS is able to keep up with the evolving demands of North Dakota's workforce. Over the past decade, innovation has accelerated rapidly, driven by advancements in new technology and artificial intelligence. These changes have significantly impacted the country's workforce, making it more efficient and technologically proficient.

For the NDUS institutions to remain competitive, they must be equipped with the necessary resources to teach students the practical, industry-specific skills needed to thrive in the progressive workforce. Investing in workforce education innovation would allow institutions to develop and expand programs that are aligned with the demands of the workforce, ensuring that students are prepared to begin careers in these innovative and technologically advanced industries. Additionally, it would provide valuable support to students and strengthen North

Dakota's economic future. This investment will continue to enhance the skilled workforce, drive economic growth, and attract students to the state.

To support the 45,000 students of the NDUS, I respectfully ask the committee for a DO PASS recommendation on HB 1221 to prioritize the long-term success of our students and a sustainable North Dakota workforce.