

Statement of Support for House Bill 1475

1/31/2025

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing as a parent to express my strong support for House Bill 1475, which seeks to provide breakfast and lunch at no cost to all students of participating school districts, nonpublic schools, and tribal schools across North Dakota. This legislation represents a critical step toward ensuring the health, well-being, and academic success of our students.

Access to nutritious meals is essential for the physical and cognitive development of children. Research consistently shows that students who are well-fed are better able to focus, perform academically, and engage in the classroom. Unfortunately, many families face financial barriers that prevent them from consistently providing nutritious meals for their children. By offering healthy school meals to all students at no cost, this bill removes the stigma associated with free or reduced-price meals and ensures that every child has access to the nutrition they need to thrive.

This bill is also a sound financial investment. By leveraging federal reimbursement programs like the National School Lunch Program and maximizing participation through the Community Eligibility Provision, North Dakota can significantly reduce the burden on state and local funds while ensuring broad access to meals. Additionally, this program will support schools in addressing food insecurity, which is a growing concern in both urban and rural communities.

The inclusive provisions of House Bill 1475 further underscore its importance. By requiring participating schools to meet federal and state nutritional standards and accommodate students with disabilities or medical needs, the bill ensures that all children, regardless of their circumstances, can benefit from these programs.

I urge the members of the House Education Committee to prioritize the health and future of our children by giving HB 1475 a Do Pass. Investing in free, healthy school meals is an investment in North Dakota's future—a future where every child has the opportunity to succeed.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to the well-being of our students.

Sincerely,

Kara L. Geiger
Mandan