

**Testimony of Landis Larson, ND AFL-CIO President  
In Support of HB 1475  
February 3, 2025**

Chairperson:

My name is Landis Larson, President of the North Dakota AFL-CIO. The North Dakota AFL-CIO is the federation of labor unions in North Dakota, representing the interests of all working people in our state.

I am testifying on behalf of the North Dakota AFL-CIO in support of House Bill 1475.

The North Dakota AFL-CIO and our affiliates resoundingly support universal preschool meals for a number of reasons:

Working families are feeling the strain of increased prices when it comes to food, childcare, housing transportation, and more. Free school meals would mean an extra \$850 per child per year that working families keep in pocket. That money gets spent locally here in North Dakota and is good for the local economy.

Even with good union jobs, working families can surely use a bit extra to make ends meet.

We understand that that business is experiencing a workforce shortage, and we believe that free school meals would make North Dakota more competitive in attracting workers with young families.

When we think of targeted relief for working families in North Dakota, there is no more efficient and accountable method than providing nutrition in the form of meals while children are at school. We know exactly where that relief is going and how it's helping.

The North Dakota AFL-CIO and our union affiliates have repeatedly, year after year, passed resolutions and motions of support at union meetings and state conventions in support of this issue.

We will continue to spend our time and resources talking about free school meals because it is such a common sense idea that our members deeply care about. It's also the right thing to do for our kids.

This is exactly the kind of bold economic relief that working families will appreciate for generations to come. We hope you can support a "Do Pass" on House Bill 1475 and be part of history in passing one of the most popular and meaningful bi-partisan bills in a generation.