

February 03, 2025

Dear Chairperson and members of the Committee,

My name is Cheyene Campbell and I live in Fargo, ND. I'm writing to express my support for HB 1475.

My husband and I don't have children but we both fully support free lunches for all students regardless of income. A student spends a full day at school. Our publicly funded schools should ensure that those students are taken care of while away from home. That includes ensuring they are fed. Breakfast and lunch should be provided free of charge for all students regardless of income. A hungry student is a distracted student.

Many opponents of this bill will say that it is the responsibility of parents to ensure their kid has food. Unfortunately, things don't happen the way they should. Some parents can't afford to pay the lunch bill. Some forget to pay it. Some can afford to pay it but just don't care. There are too many variables in which children are subjected to the possibility of having no food for an entire day. In a wealthy state in a wealthy country, there is no reason to deny free breakfasts and lunches to students.

I remember vividly the shame I felt when I was turned away from lunch services for having a negative balance in my lunch account. My friends offered parts of their lunches to me so I'd have something to eat. Do we want to put the onus of feeding children on the charity of other children, when we adults should be the ones protecting them? Do we want children to be shamed over something they have no control over? I don't think we do.

Please approve HB 1475.

Respectfully,

Cheyene Campbell

Fargo, ND