

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Dr. Grant Syverson and I am writing on behalf of the North Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics in strong support of HB 1475, which ensures that all children in North Dakota will have access to nutritious school meals.

Appropriate childhood nutrition is fundamental for the mental and physical growth of children. Childhood hunger impacts concentration, memory, and engagement. Access to school meals improves nutrition, health outcomes, physical and cognitive development, school performance, and addresses food insecurity. HB 1474 will also remove income-based eligibility requirements which will reduce stigma and provide equitable access to healthy meals.

Studies have shown that access to free school meals can reduce childhood obesity which can prevent related chronic health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease and reduce healthcare costs.

Please support the children of North Dakota and provide a Do Pass recommendation for HB 1475.

Sincerely,

Dr. Grant Syverson

NDAAP Advocacy Liaison