

Chair Heinert and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Alisha Webster, and I am a special education teacher in Dickinson. I am testifying in support of HB 1553.

Earlier this year, an eleven-year-old told me he wished he could drop out of school, to save his mother money on lunches. Students who are hungry struggle to learn. So often, when one of my students has a behavioral outburst, it can be linked to their basic needs not being met. Often that they didn't have breakfast. While the neediest families do have access to free and reduced food, often students or families avoid this option out of shame or family dysfunction making the paperwork hard to fill out. If we could take this burden off the mind of students and their families it would have an amazing effect on their present achievement, and their futures. This would be an investment in the future of North Dakota!

Meeting students' basic needs would help them now and in the future. It would benefit all citizens of North Dakota.