



North Dakota Native Vote  
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**Testimony of Nicole Donaghy, Executive Director  
North Dakota Native Vote  
In Support of House Bill 1565**

Chairman Heinert and Members of the House Education Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 1565. This bill seeks to establish a grant program to support the education of nonbeneficiary students attending tribally controlled schools and amends provisions related to agreements between public agencies and tribal governments. House Bill 1565 is a critical step toward lessening the achievement gap, strengthening tribal-state collaboration, and ensuring access to quality education for all students in North Dakota.

Tribal schools provide a culturally responsive education to Native students while also serving nonbeneficiary students who may lack access to other educational resources. However, the financial burden of educating nonbeneficiary students places strain on these schools' resources. Establishing a state grant program will address this challenge by providing necessary funding, ensuring these schools can continue to meet the needs of their communities without compromising educational quality or sustainability. This solution promotes fairness by affirming that all students, regardless of background, have access to quality educational opportunities.

The amendments to Section 54-40.2-02 of the North Dakota Century Code further facilitate effective partnerships between public agencies and tribal governments. By clarifying the authority to enter into agreements while preserving local decision-making, the bill advances cooperative governance. Such partnerships are essential for addressing shared challenges and advancing the well-being of all learners through collaborative solutions.

In addition to their educational mission, tribal schools serve as vital centers for cultural preservation and community development. This bill acknowledges their unique role in supporting Native American heritage and recognizes the importance of maintaining these institutions as safe learning environments for all students. Ensuring that these schools have the resources to fulfill their mission benefits not only the students they serve but also the broader community.

House Bill 1565 represents a forward-thinking response to the challenges faced by tribal schools and reflects North Dakota's commitment to educational equity, cultural preservation, and effective governance. I respectfully ask that the House Education Committee give HB 1565 a Do Pass recommendation and advance it for the benefit of all students and communities in our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.