

North Dakota Legislative Council  
State Capitol  
600 East Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58505

January 25, 2025

To the people of the North Dakota Human Services Committee,

I am writing today in support of **House Bill 1612** which would offer a \$2 Million appropriation that would positively impact the development of the North Dakota Center for Aerospace Medicine.

My background is in the medical field as I worked at Altru Hospital for 17 years as an RN, I now proudly work as a Flight Physiologist at UND Aerospace. This department focuses mostly on the physiological/physical effects that can occur within the body while we are in flight. Having been in healthcare so long, I also know not only the physiological or physical effects can hurt human performance.

Seeing the wide array of mental health struggles in our society was very abundant while working in healthcare, in the aviation world it is also very common, but not discussed. There is a wide variety of reasons students do not seek help, the biggest reason being misinformation regarding losing their medical certification to fly aircraft. Students would rather take information from an inconspicuous source like the rumor mill instead of seeking professional help. This is one of the biggest reasons why I support this bill and the idea of UND having their own center for Aerospace medicine. Here at UND, we are so lucky to have a robust, world class medical mchool as well as the valued and respected John D Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences. There is no doubt, that when these two combine it will be an absolute powerhouse, providing top tier services to our students, especially for those struggling with mental health.

Respectfully,

**Jennifer M Watne, RN**

Physiologist

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