

TESTIMONY OF DERRICK HOHBEIN

Senate Bill 2404 – ADA Compliance

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

My name is Derrick Hohbein, and I serve as the Chief Operating and Financial Officer for the North Dakota Public Employees Retirement System (NDPERS). I appear today in support of SB 2404, and appreciate the committee's time during this special session to address the critical need for compliance with the U.S. Department of Justice's final ruling requiring all public-facing digital content to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA standards by April 24, 2026. Failure to comply by this deadline could result in significant federal penalties or the suspension of federal funding.

NDPERS has identified three primary areas requiring focused attention:

- Member Portal
- Employer Portal
- Public Website

Our public website has historically been maintained in compliance with WCAG standards by our Public Information Manager. Moving forward, the primary compliance effort will involve ensuring that all newly uploaded documents meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA requirements.

In contrast, our member and employer portals have not undergone accessibility compliance scans since their inception in 2010. To meet the April 2026 deadline, the Board approved a contract with our business system vendor at its October 29, 2025 meeting to upgrade these portals. The estimated effort and cost are as follows:

- Member Portal: 1,994 hours at a cost of \$188,713
- Employer Portal: 1,301 hours at a cost of \$115,939

Because this requirement emerged after the conclusion of the most recent Legislative Session, we were unable to request dedicated funding for this initiative. Today, we are requesting an increase in our appropriation authority—without additional funding—of \$304,652 to cover this work effort. NDPERS is a special-funded agency and does not receive any general fund revenue.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.