

**HB 1622**

January 21, 2026

Eniola Soetan, North Dakota Student Association

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Chairs Lee, Ruby, and Members of the Joint Policy Committee,

My name is Eniola Soetan, and I am a delegate of the North Dakota Student Association. I am writing to express my support for HB 1622.

The North Dakota Student Association (NDSA) is a student organization established in 1969 that is dedicated to ensuring that students have a voice in policy that affects Higher Education. The NDSA consists of delegates from each of the 11 public institutions that meet monthly to engage students in Higher Education policy in North Dakota. Our mission is to empower students, foster collaboration between students across campuses in the North Dakota University System, and to advocate on issues of higher education in support of access, affordability, quality, and the student experience.

The North Dakota Student Association is committed to protecting the rights and safety of all NDUS students, as is evidenced in our [2025-2027 biennium legislative priorities](#). Every student deserves to have reasonable access to healthcare, and the proposed physician assistant licensure compact would ensure that there is more access across our state and nearby states to the crucial services of physician assistants.

Recognizing the importance of licensure compacts in eliminating barriers and creating access, last year the NDSA passed [NDSA-14-2425: A Resolution in Support of Interstate Licensure Compacts](#). Not only does SB 1622 reduce barriers of access to care for our North Dakota residents, but it also reduces barriers for residents of nearby states who wish to study and practice in the state of North Dakota. According to a peer-reviewed journal article by Molly Maeve Musk^[1], interstate licensure compacts allow people to work in career paths and

areas that otherwise would have been relatively inaccessible to them; when we talk about things like reducing our workforce shortages, any initiative that has the ability to increase career pathway access and therefore increase the number of people working in a particular career goes a very long way. When we talk about this in the context of healthcare jobs, these workforce increases have the potential to literally be lifesaving.

Support for HB 1622 would expand the innovative and collaborative efforts of other interstate licensure compacts that came through last legislative session, such as the compact for dieticians and occupational therapists. Healthcare is a whole team effort, with people more often requiring multiple different healthcare services in order to achieve their full health and wellness needs. While we do the work of reducing the physician assistant shortage in-state, it is also important for us to remain proactive and to provide pathways for people to access this important healthcare right now, and an interstate licensure compact is one very helpful and practical way to do so.

To support increased access to healthcare access for the 45,000 students served by the NDSA, create more opportunities and access to practice as a physician assistant in North Dakota, and to incentivize physician assistant practice in North Dakota for individuals in nearby states who otherwise would not be able to practice here, I would like to express my support for HB 1622, and on behalf of the NDSA ask for a DO PASS recommendation on HB 1622 from the joint committee.

[1]- Lusk M. 2023. The Role of Interstate Compacts in Modernizing the Healthcare Workforce. Policy Perspective 14(1):81-4. [The Role of Interstate Compacts in Modernizing the Healthcare Workforce - Journal of Nursing Regulation](#)