



Testimony for the 69th Legislative Assembly – House Energy and Natural Resources

February 7, 2025

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Bill: HB 1365

Position: In Opposition

Dear Chairman Porter and Members of the Committee.

For the record, my name is Andrew Armacost, and I am the President of the University of North Dakota. I'm writing in opposition to House Bill 1588, specifically our concern about the proposed language that would allow possession of firearms or dangerous weapons on college campuses and at campus events.

Among my concerns are the growing behavioral health risks and substance use disorders that exist on our campuses. Introducing firearms and dangerous weapons into that mix could prove fatal. The Kaiser Family Foundation has demonstrated the connection between higher suicide rates and access to firearms.

Our campus, along with the other campuses in the NDUS, already sustain strong safety records and currently have high perceptions of safety among students, faculty, and staff. We pride ourselves on the great work of our University Police Department and their response to any issues on our campus.

Legalizing weapons on the campus might provide a higher perception of safety for some, but perceptions of less safety for others. These perceptions will impact how our students and faculty engage with one another and will impact our ability to attract and retain employees on our campuses.

Let me close by encouraging the bill authors to consider adding college campuses as an exception to the provisions of this bill. Thank you.