



NDSBA
**NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL
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HB 1223
Testimony of Amy De Kok
Senate Education Committee
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Chairman Beard and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Amy De Kok, and I am the Executive Director for the North Dakota School Boards Association (NDSBA). NDSBA represents all 168 public school districts and their governing boards. I am here in support of HB 1223, which provides school districts with the ability to expel a student for up to a full calendar year in cases of serious misconduct.

Under current North Dakota law, a student may only be expelled through the end of the academic year, except in cases involving possession of a firearm on school property, which requires expulsion for up to a year. This limitation can pose challenges for school districts, particularly when a student engages in egregious misconduct near the end of the school year. Without the ability to impose an appropriate consequence extending into the following academic year, schools may struggle to maintain a safe and secure learning environment.

HB 1223 addresses this issue by granting school districts the flexibility to extend expulsions for up to twelve months. This change ensures that schools are equipped with the necessary disciplinary tools to respond effectively to serious infractions, regardless of when they occur in the academic calendar. The bill also upholds due process protections by requiring a hearing before an expulsion decision is made, ensuring fairness for students and families.

The severity of certain student behaviors—such as acts of violence, repeated threats, or severe disruptions—demands a response that prioritizes school safety and the well-being of students and staff. By allowing districts to consider factors such as the severity of the offense, the student’s age, and disciplinary history, HB 1223 ensures that expulsion decisions are made thoughtfully and proportionally.

Ultimately, this bill does not mandate extended expulsions but rather empowers local school boards to make decisions that best serve their communities. Flexibility is key in ensuring that disciplinary policies reflect the unique circumstances of each case while maintaining the integrity of our schools.

I respectfully urge this committee to give HB 1223 a Do Pass recommendation. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.