

Neutral Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2286

Presented to the Senate Education Committee of the ND Legislative Assembly

Chairman Beard and members of the committee, thank you for an opportunity to submit neutral testimony regarding Senate Bill No. 2286. I write in my capacity as a private citizen.

This bill proposes a legislative study on funding an expanded University of North Dakota health professions collaborative facility. The study would assess education and internship needs statewide. These appear to be very worthwhile pursuits.

The bill also includes a one-time appropriation of \$95 million (\$55 million from the general fund and \$40 million from other sources) to expand the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences to house the health professions collaborative facility. Studies can provide valuable insights, and thus it seems counterintuitive to allocate funding for a project while simultaneously commissioning a study to determine what specific needs it should help address. If the study seeks to establish needs related to this expansion, then proceeding with funding now appears premature. Conversely, if the need is already well-established, the study may be redundant.

Also, a \$95 million appropriation request is a significant amount of tax dollars, and an amount this large should not have been included in a section of a study bill. While I do not contend that “the lede got buried” intentionally here, for sake of transparency it should be either its own bill or a part of the UND appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

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