

Chairman Wobbema and Members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

My name is Matt Liebel, and I am writing in **strong support of HB 1238**, which seeks to reduce the number of years required for a lifetime teacher license from 30 years to 20 years. This legislation is a critical step in supporting and strengthening North Dakota's educator workforce.

As our state faces ongoing teacher shortages, it is essential that we recognize and retain the dedicated professionals who have committed decades of service to our schools. By adjusting the requirement to 20 years, we are not diminishing the value of experience but rather acknowledging the evolving landscape of education, where burnout and early retirements have become more prevalent.

A lifetime license at the 20-year mark serves multiple benefits:

- **Retention & Morale:** Many teachers dedicate their entire careers to North Dakota's students but leave the profession early due to growing challenges. This bill provides an incentive for educators to remain in the field longer, knowing they will be recognized and supported.
- **Workforce Stability:** Allowing teachers to secure a lifetime license earlier can encourage experienced educators to stay engaged in mentoring roles, leadership positions, and part-time teaching opportunities, rather than leaving the profession entirely.
- **Recruitment & Sustainability:** In a competitive job market, North Dakota must remain proactive in attracting and keeping quality teachers. A 20-year lifetime license demonstrates that we value educators' contributions and wish to reduce unnecessary bureaucratic barriers.

Two years ago, this bill narrowly failed on a tied 23-23 vote. However, the challenges facing North Dakota schools have only grown more urgent since then. Now is the time to take meaningful action to honor veteran educators and strengthen the future of our schools.

I respectfully urge you to **support HB 1238** and ensure it moves forward in the legislative process. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Matt Liebel

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