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Senate Workforce Development Committee
North Dakota Legislative Assembly
600 E Boulevard Ave
Bismarck, ND 58505

Re: Opposition to SB 2341

Dear Members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to SB 2341 as currently written. As a practicing school psychologist and a member of the Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB), I have concerns regarding the impact of this legislation on our profession and the students we serve. While addressing the shortage of school psychologists is a critical issue, I do not believe this compact provides a viable solution for North Dakota.

ESPB has a long-standing record of efficiently processing licensure applications, including those from out-of-state applicants, ensuring that qualified professionals can enter the workforce without unnecessary delays. Additionally, ESPB has already taken proactive steps to support military families by waiving licensure fees for military members and their spouses. These existing measures demonstrate our state's commitment to reducing barriers for incoming professionals while maintaining high standards of practice.

Furthermore, ESPB's recertification requirements allow school psychologists to maintain national certification, ensuring that those serving in our schools meet rigorous professional standards. The current compact language raises concerns that it could supersede North Dakota's state laws and regulations, potentially compromising the quality and oversight of school psychology services within our schools. As a board member, I find this particularly troubling, as our state's ability to regulate the profession should remain under the authority of state agencies that understand our local needs and priorities.

From my perspective as a practicing school psychologist, I do not anticipate this compact bringing a significant increase in school psychologists to our districts. Many of my colleagues were born and raised in North Dakota and chose to work here because of their connection to the community, not because of licensure barriers. Instead of adopting an interstate compact that may not address the root causes of our workforce challenges, we should focus on strategies that directly support the recruitment and retention of school psychologists in our state, such as loan forgiveness programs, competitive salaries, and incentives for professionals to serve in rural areas.

Additionally, if the compact is adopted, there is concern regarding the financial impact on licensure costs. ESPB is a fee-funded agency, meaning any additional costs associated with joining and maintaining

participation in the compact would likely be passed on to license holders. This could result in increased fees for school psychologists without providing a meaningful benefit in addressing the workforce shortage.

North Dakota's schools need qualified school psychologists to support the growing needs of our students, but SB 2341 does not offer a meaningful solution to this challenge. I urge the committee to carefully consider the implications of this legislation and explore alternative approaches that better address the needs of our schools while preserving the integrity of our state's licensure process.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amber Fridley
School Psychologist, Dickinson Public Schools
Education Standards and Practices Board Teacher Representative