



STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
GOVERNOR DOUG BURGUM

NORTH DAKOTA STATE BOARD OF PHARMACY
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Senate Bill 2395 - Universal Licensure and Board Operations

Senate Workforce Development Committee- Fort Lincoln Room

9:00 A.M.- Friday – February 21st, 2025

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee, for the record I am Mark Hardy, PharmD, Executive Director of the North Dakota Board of Pharmacy. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to voice our support for Senate Bill 2395 with the amendments.

This bill comes to you based on a study completed by the Department of Labor during the interim. This comprehensive study examined licensing boards in the state and provides another study for policymakers to ensure licensing boards are operating efficiently and appropriately. Through the study, we appreciated the open dialogue with the former Labor Commissioner and research assistant. It was very meaningful to discuss the best practices and to help brainstorm solutions based on their research and findings. A primary goal was to ensure applicants from out of state are moving into practice as quickly as possible within the state while ensuring safeguards for the public. We agree with the provisions set forward in this legislation that recognize, in large part, what many boards are currently doing, however, looking to meaningful address areas of best practice identified during the study. This bill would enact a Universal Licensure process for the state of North Dakota similar to other states.

Our Board is especially excited about the provision on page 4, number 9, which provides our Board the opportunity to further help to address needs in the workforce for pharmacists in our state. Our Board would like to further examine a model, like other states use, to work with the NDSU School of Pharmacy where the Board could fund, through our reserves, scholarships to incentivize future pharmacists to stay in our state to practice in communities needing medical professionals.

I think it is important to highlight to the committee there has been extensive studies by multiple agencies as well as legislative interim committees in the state looking at licensing boards to examine efficiencies and improvements. Based on these studies and actions, the state of North Dakota should have confidence in the framework of licensing boards in the state. North Dakota's framework leverages the free market and private businesses to drive efficiencies to ensure the state is well positioned to serve the citizens and have efficient and accessible models for Boards with no cost to the general fund. We learned of pitfalls of states that have tried to centralized Boards within a singular agency and the challenges it presents to the workforce and state.

These studies have taken a considerable amount of time and energy away from the limited resources of boards, as well as creating uncertainty with our general business operations. While I respect the legislature's authority over licensing board, I do hope this bill will bring some finality to these ongoing studies to allow boards to focus on their statutory obligations to the public and licensees and innovate in their processes.

Ultimately, SB2395 is very good legislation and, with the amendments, we are fully supportive. I particularly appreciate the bill sponsor, Majority Leader Hogue, asking and taking our input to ensure this legislation is ready for your considerations. I would be happy to address any questions you may have.