

SB 2140

March 8, 2021

Sen. Joan Heckaman

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am Sen. Joan Heckaman from D-23 and I am here to lend my support to SB 2140 that addresses loan repayments by students studying veterinary medicine.

I have been on both sides of this fence on this issue in past sessions but have come to realize penalizing people does not entice them to return to North Dakota, nor does it send a message that we are here to support our agriculture industry and people who care for large and small animals. I believe the removal of the repayment stipulation may increase the number of veterinary students returning to begin their practice in the state. We need to remember that these students have additional loans they need to repay because this program only pays the difference between the out of state tuition and in state tuition at the veterinarian school they are attending. So, these students continue to have significant loans to pay off regardless of this program.

The study added by the Senate is also important to flesh out issues that may need attention next session.

We need to keep our PSEP student pipeline strong, not only in veterinary medicine, but also in dentistry and optometry.

I would ask that you give SB 2140 a Do Pass recommendation.