

## HB1447

House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

February 18, 2021

Lisa A. Johnson, Vice Chancellor of Academic & Student Affairs, NDUS  
701.328.4143 | [lisa.a.johnson@ndus.edu](mailto:lisa.a.johnson@ndus.edu)

Chair Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name is Lisa Johnson, and I serve as the Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs for the North Dakota University System. I am here today on behalf of the University System (but not the State Board of Higher Education, which has not taken a position on this legislation) to provide neutral testimony related to HB1447 and to present proposed amendments to HB1447.

The North Dakota University System understands and supports the intent of sponsors of HB1447 to facilitate college student participation in the election process. We recognize that participation in the voting process is a significant and positive step towards increased civic engagement.

At present, the campus-issued student identification card contains a student's name, photo, and student identification number. The magnetic strip on the back of the card serves a variety of purposes and is used to track dining services, printing services, provides access to restricted spaces and residence halls, and as a student pass to access campus events and activities.

Students were most concerned with the bill's original requirement to print a local address on the campus-issued identification card. Lost campus identification cards would now readily provide not only the local address of the student, but also access to the student's room in their residence hall and even control of the student's dining and printing services accounts. Printing the address on a student's identification card would also result in a substantial increase in costs and staff time, as students move regularly, usually at least once a year, and would require a new identification card to be issued with each move – compared to now, where cards only need to be replaced if lost or in the event of a name change, such as after a marriage.

The proposed amendments are presented for the Committee's consideration and incorporate a possible solution that addresses not only the concerns articulated by students, but also those reported by campus staff who work more closely with the admission of students, the maintenance of student records and the issuance of student identification cards.

The first and most substantial proposed amendment to Section 1 of the bill, which is located on Page 1 of the Christmas Tree version at lines 8-13, replaces the requirements of the bill of a "student identification card" with that of a "voting document." The voting document would be a printable PDF that could be generated through a self-service process containing all of the information detailed in Century Code Section 16.1-01-04.1 Subsection 2, including legal name, current residential address in North Dakota, and date of birth, along with the institution's letterhead or seal, which would help election officials verify the document's validity. This is the same type of document that

was previously and successfully provided during the 2016 election to permit students to verify their addresses in North Dakota for voting purposes.

The amendment to Section 2 of the Bill, which is located at Page 2, lines 9-14 of the Christmas Tree version, requires that the voting document reiterates those requirements, and requires that the voting document must be used in tandem with a student's photographic student identification card, which combined would permit election workers to verify that the student is eligible to vote in the precinct, and that the student is who they claim to be. The current campus-issued student identification card would meets this requirement and would not endanger student safety or result in unpredictable or increased costs to the institutions.

Again, the North Dakota University System is supportive of the intended goals outlined in HB1447, but cannot support the bill in its current form. The NDUS asks that the Committee adopt these proposed amendments as a means of maintaining the safety of our students while supporting civic engagement through the voting process, which NDUS fully supports.

This concludes my testimony related to HB1447, and I stand for questions from Committee members.