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Testimony of Dr. Woodrow W. “Chip” Poland, Jr.  
On behalf of the Dickinson State University Department of Agriculture and Technical Studies  
In support of House Bill 1430  
March 10, 2021

Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Dr. Chip Poland, and I am the Chair of the Dickinson State University (DSU) Department of Agriculture and Technical Studies. I am testifying today in support of House Bill 1430, which relates to the North Dakota academic and career and technical education (CTE) scholarships.

In my position as chair of the DSU Department of Agriculture and Technical Studies, I interact with our students on a daily basis. I can tell you with certainty that students appreciate any and all scholarships they receive, and these scholarships identified in House Bill 1430 are essential to recruiting and keeping students engaged in career and technical education fields.

There are 16 career clusters in the National Career Clusters Framework which serves as an organizing tool for CTE programs, curriculum design, and instruction. Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources is one of these clusters.<sup>1</sup> According to Applied Educational Systems, 95% of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://careertech.org/career-clusters>

CTE students graduate high school, which is 10% higher than the national average, and 78% of CTE graduates enroll in post-secondary education full-time.<sup>2</sup> We need these students!

Nearly one-fourth of North Dakota's workforce is employed by production agriculture/agriculture-related industries. North Dakota's agriculture exports in 2017 alone were \$4.5 billion.<sup>3</sup> North Dakota is #1 in the nation in the production of canola, dry edible beans, dry edible peas, flaxseed, honey, durum wheat, and spring wheat and is ranked in the top ten in 17 other commodities.<sup>4</sup> DSU is proud to play a role in this industry. The students in the DSU Department of Agriculture and Technical Studies graduate and go on to be leaders in the agricultural industry.

Scholarships are essential to keeping the students engaged and committed to their education. In my experience, scholarships of any size give a sense of worth to a student. A student feels more connected to their program of study and is more willing to continue in their program and receive a degree if a scholarship is granted.

North Dakota's motto, "Strength from the Soil," appears on the state's coat of arms and governor's flag. Agriculture, as a part of CTE, is essential to not only our state's economy and way of life but also to the nation. From my perspective, students in the agriculture cluster of CTE are valued, needed, and vital to keeping the industry thriving well into the future.

I do have one concern with House Bill 1430. The current bill differentiates two-year and tribal institutions from the other institutions in the state with regard to level of student support per semester. As the missions of our institutions evolve, things like Bismarck State College beginning to offer four-year degrees as a polytechnic and Dickinson State University beginning to offer certificate and two-year degrees as part of our dual mission, I would encourage this

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aeseducation.com/career-technical-education-facts-that-prove-its-awesome>

<sup>3</sup> Sources: North Dakota Department of Agriculture, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, and Office of the United States Trade Representative

<sup>4</sup> [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov)

legislation to evolve to differentiate enrollment in two-year and four-year programs rather than by type of institution.

In closing, CTE scholarships are essential to engaging students in the important careers encompassed in CTE.

I would ask the committee to please vote DO PASS on House Bill 1430 and to fully consider my concerns regarding enrollment in programs rather than institutions as a means of differentiating level of student support in the final passage of the bill.

