

SB2136

Senate Education Committee

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Chair Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Brenda Zastoupil, and I serve as the Financial Aid Director of the North Dakota University System (NDUS). I am here to provide testimony in support of SB2136. Section 3 and 4 of the bill introduce language that provides for the scholarship at accredited private career schools in North Dakota and provides clarifying language of “program” and that the award applies only to institutions with a “physical presence” in the state.

The NDUS administers the payment of the scholarship on behalf of qualifying students who attend accredited institutions of higher education within the state. Current statutory language provides for the scholarship if a student attends an accredited institution in the state, however, it also limits those institutions to semester and quarter-based schools. Further, the statute currently requires grade point average (GPA) and cumulative credits be maintained. This language further prevents the award from being issued at accredited state career schools that operate under a clock-hour system and grade on a percentage basis.

To provide for awards at clock-hour institutions, the NDUS is requesting an amendment to Section 3, page 7, line 23 and Section 4, page 8, line 19, providing the ability for the state board of higher education to not only define clock-hour term, but to also provide for conversion of clock hours to credit hours, and percentage-based-grading to GPA. I ask for your consideration of this additional statement to assist in the administration of the award: “For purposes of scholarship eligibility under this section, the state board of higher education will set the standards for conversion of clock hours to credit hours, and percentage-based grading to grade point average.”

The changes presented, including the requested amendment, would provide the opportunity for ND resident students to utilize the scholarship to further their education and attain their career goals. This concludes my testimony in support of SB2136, and I will stand for questions from the committee.