

**Testimony of Landis Larson, ND AFL-CIO President
In Support of HB 1494
January 30, 2023**

Chairperson Heinert and members of House Education:

My name is Landis Larson, President of the North Dakota AFL-CIO. The North Dakota AFL-CIO is the federation of labor unions in North Dakota, representing the interests of all working people in our state.

I am testifying on behalf of the North Dakota AFL-CIO in support of House Bill 1494.

Thank you to the bill sponsors for bringing the legislature into such an important discussion facing our working families in North Dakota.

While most schools in North Dakota have good policies that avoid meal shaming practices, some policies allow or even require some of these practices in their school meals policies. Any practices that single out kids, provide a less-nutritious and cheaper “alternative meal”, or send families to debt collections should rightly be ended in all school districts in North Dakota. We know these practices result in kids not getting the nutrition they need while at school and are harmful to kids and their families physical and mental wellbeing.

At its heart, this bill is about using common sense best practices for treating our students and families with dignity and respect when it comes to feeding our kids at school. It’s also the right thing to do. The North Dakota AFL-CIO fully supports House Bill 1494.