

Testimony in Support of HB 1494/1491

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North Dakota House Education Committee

January 30, 2023

Chairman Heinert and members of the committee:

On behalf of the North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People and Youthworks, I submit this testimony in favor of HB 1491, and if necessary, 1494. As advocates for families struggling with homelessness, the NDCHP and Youthworks frequently see the adverse impacts that hunger has on North Dakota children's ability to learn and thrive. Hunger is a massive problem, hidden in plain sight. 1 in 12 North Dakotan children face hunger and 1 in 6 families sought hunger assistance. The Great Plains Food Bank has, in recent years, had near the highest numbers of people served in its 40 year history, showing that 140,000 North Dakotan were struggling with hunger in 2022. This is a clear problem that merits a direct response from the North Dakota legislature. Access to food is a fundamental need, and children don't have the ability to acquire it for themselves. Therefore, we request a "do pass" on HB 1491 and if necessary, HB 1494.