

NDSU

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

HB 1200

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Chairman Weisz and Members of the Committee: My name is Seth Lumley, and I am the Executive Commissioner of Legislative Affairs for North Dakota State University's Student Government. I would like to provide testimony in opposition to HB 1200 and to present the perspective of NDSU students on HB 1200.

NDSU Student Government is an organization of students at NDSU elected and appointed to represent the interests of the NDSU student body both externally at places like the capitol and internally through our student senate. We are comprised of members from all academic colleges at North Dakota State University, ensuring students from all majors and backgrounds have a voice. Our mission is to leave the university better than we arrived through ensuring that student voices are heard both on campus and at the legislature.

Coming into NDSU as a freshman during the COVID-19 pandemic was a very difficult time for me. Classes I had previously expected to be held in person were online, holding classes over Zoom made learning and focusing more difficult, and the sense of community I had come to expect from college was eerily missing. Mental health among students took so much of a hit that there was a period of 5 consecutive weeks where no appointments were available at our

counseling center. So, when I and many other students heard that multiple vaccines were being produced to combat the virus, we were relieved that the pandemic might finally be coming to an end.

Once available, NDSU made it easy for students to get the vaccine. The administration sent out promotional emails, gave away informational pamphlets, and set up events to make getting the vaccine as easy as possible. It took longer than I had hoped, but eventually everything went back to normal on campus. Importantly, at no point was the COVID vaccine required for students to be on campus. The materials provided allowed me to better assess the situation and inform my decision. Laws like this could have serious unintended consequences going forward should anything akin to the COVID-19 pandemic ever happen in the future.

It is support for the freedom to promote the COVID vaccine or other emergency vaccines in the future that act as the purpose behind my testimony today and it is for this reason that I urge you to oppose HB 1200. Thank you Chairman Weisz and Members of the Committee.