

NDSU

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

HB 1200

March 8, 2023

Seth Lumley, NDSU Student Government

seth.lumley@ndus.edu – (507) 481-5510

Chair Lee 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.

Students from across the country suffered from an increase in mental health issues during the pandemic. Classes were moved online and the sense of community we expected from college was missing. At the NDSU counseling center, there was a period of 5 consecutive weeks when no appointments were available because they were so booked. The news that vaccines from

Operation Warp Speed were finally available gave students hope that the pandemic was coming to a close.

We have concerns that this bill may have unintended consequences should another pandemic akin to COVID-19 ever happen in the future. For many students like myself who get most of our news from the internet, it can be difficult to sort through conflicting information about quickly developing and sensational events like a pandemic. Having informative resources from the university available to students about the COVID-19 vaccine was immensely helpful in informing my decision. If this bill passes, our concern is that these resources, which included pamphlets and events which made it easy for students to get vaccinated if they wanted to, would not be allowed in the event of another pandemic. To be completely clear, our concern lies with the ban on promoting the COVID-19 or other emergency authorized vaccines, not the ban on requiring these vaccines.

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 Chair Lee and Members of the Committee.