



Letter of Support – S.B. 2003

Monday, March 10, 2025

Chairman Nathe and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee - Education and Environment Division,

For the record, my name is Cale Dunwoody, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber). On behalf of our over 1,700 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 2003, specifically relating to the funding formula and Challenge Grant program.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. We recognize the immense impact higher education has on students and the workforce environment of our state. NDUS serves 45,800 students at 11 institutions across the state, providing them with crucial skills and education. These institutions of higher education are at the forefront of supplying our state's critical industries with the workforce needed to grow and prosper.

To ensure that North Dakotan institutions of higher education can continue providing world class education and critical research outcomes, a pragmatic review of the state's funding formula is necessary. While the current formula was thoughtfully developed, it must be reevaluated to meet the current demands and ensure equitable funding across all institutions. The ability to provide high-quality education, foster workforce development, and sustain research excellence depends on a stable and predictable funding structure. By ensuring a balanced and forward-looking approach, the state can uphold its commitment to strengthening higher education and spurring economic development. We urge a review of the current system to ensure stability in the future.

Additionally, we commend the North Dakota Legislature for its steadfast commitment to the Challenge Grant program. Since its inception in 2013, this groundbreaking initiative has amplified donors' gifts allowing millions in scholarships for students and enhancing the workforce of North Dakota. With the program's matching investment from individual and corporate benefactors, institutions can amplify the state's investment to enhance their ability to recruit and retain students, cultivating a robust pipeline of qualified professionals essential for our state's economic growth. We urge this committee to support the Governor's recommendation of \$50 million for the Challenge Grant Program.

I respectfully urge the committee to give this S.B. 2003 a DO PASS recommendation and continue funding the critical services provided throughout the North Dakota Universities System.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your commitment to North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Cale Dunwoody
Vice President of Public Policy
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce