



North Dakota House of Representatives

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Good Afternoon Chairman Heinert, Vice Chair Schreiber-Beck and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 1565. This bill is a step toward fairness and sustainability in education, ensuring that tribally controlled schools receive the necessary support to educate all students who walk through their doors, regardless of their enrollment status in a federally recognized tribe.

For years, tribally controlled schools have played a crucial role in educating students in North Dakota, not just Native students, but all who seek a quality education in their communities. However, unlike public schools, which receive state funding based on total enrollment, tribally controlled schools rely on federal funding that only accounts for tribal-enrolled students. This creates a gap, leaving these schools to bear the financial burden of educating nonbeneficiary students without the resources to fully support them. If a child is enrolled in a school, they should receive the same level of investment in their education as their peers, regardless of whether they meet a federal definition.

House Bill 1565 does not seek special treatment for these schools; it seeks a practical and responsible solution. The state has long recognized the importance of funding public education equitably, and this bill extends that principle to tribally controlled schools. These institutions are often the most viable or accessible option for many families, and they should not be financially penalized for providing education to all who need it. This is a common-sense

measure that ensures no student is left behind simply because of a technical funding loophole.

Education should never be a partisan issue. When we invest in students, we invest in our communities and our future workforce. This bill reflects North Dakota's commitment to educational opportunity and fairness, supporting schools that are already doing the hard work of serving diverse populations.

By passing House Bill 1565, we ensure that every student attending a tribally controlled school—whether they are a tribal member or not—has access to the full resources and quality education they deserve. I urge the committee to advance this bill and demonstrate our state's dedication to education that works for everyone.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and I will stand for any questions.