



Testimony of Laura Lacher
Economic Development Association of North Dakota
In Opposition of SB 2035
March 5, 2025

Chair Heinert and members of the House Education committee:

My name is Laura Lacher, and I serve as the executive director of the Economic Development Association of North Dakota (EDND). I am submitting this testimony in opposition to SB 2035 and to highlight the importance of clear and inclusive language when defining organizations that serve our communities.

EDND represents more than 80 organizations across North Dakota that work to improve quality of life by addressing workforce needs, supporting local businesses, enhancing infrastructure, and strengthening communities. Many of these organizations rely on charitable gaming funds to provide vital services in their regions.

We believe that replacing the term “economic development organizations” with “community development organizations” in the bill would provide greater clarity and better reflect the broad scope of work these organizations perform. Community development organizations encompass not only traditional economic development efforts but also initiatives that support housing, childcare, workforce training, and other essential services that directly improve the well-being of North Dakotans.

While we support ensuring these funds are used appropriately, the language in SB 2035 is currently too subjective and could create uncertainty for organizations that have a strong track record of responsible fund management. The bill risks disqualifying organizations that provide essential services in rural communities, weakening their ability to address local needs effectively.

Charitable gaming funds have long supported crucial community programs such as childcare assistance, youth and adult education, and workforce initiatives. By clearly recognizing community

development organizations in statute, we can ensure these funds continue to strengthen North Dakota's communities in a meaningful and transparent way.

We urge the committee to recognize this important distinction and ensure SB 2035 does not unintentionally restrict access to these critical resources. To uphold strong support for North Dakota communities, we respectfully request a Do Not Pass recommendation on SB 2035 unless the proposed changes are adopted. Thank you for your time and consideration.