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House Education Committee for the 69th ND Legislative Assembly

Chairman Heinert and members of the Education Committee, my name is Andrew Horn, and I am the Coalition Program Director for Tobacco Free North Dakota. The mission of Tobacco Free North Dakota is to improve and protect the public health of all North Dakotans by reducing the serious health and economic consequences of tobacco use, the state's number one cause of preventable disease and death. Thank you so much for your time this morning.

Today I am here to recommend a DO NOT PASS on SB 2105, the bill relating to the administration of surveys to students in kindergarten through grade twelve schools, as this bill would significantly reduce the access to data surrounding tobacco use in our state. Simply put, we can't fix problems unless we can identify them. That is what these surveys can do.

TFND, along with many public and private partners, rely on a particular survey, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, to inform the public about a myriad of youth-related issues in North Dakota, including tobacco use. If SB 2105 is passed, we would lose access to one of the most comprehensive data sets at our disposal that we use to improve health outcomes for all North Dakotans.

Here are some important data points from the 2023 survey:

- The percentage of high school students who currently smoke cigarettes (during 1 of the past 30 days) is 5.4%
- The percentage of high school students who currently use electronic vapor products (during 1 of the past 30 days) is 18.2%
- The percentage of middle school students who currently use electronic vapor products (during 1 of the past 30 days) is 7.6%

By using the historical data, we can see that all the above numbers are decreasing, which shows our public health strategies are working. Good data leads to good policy, and good policy leads to good outcomes for all North Dakotans. We must do everything we can to preserve our survey administering capabilities and continue this cycle.

Again, I urge a DO NOT PASS on SB2105. Thank you for your time this morning. May I answer any questions?

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