



**SB 2147**

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Chair Heinert and Members of the Committee: My name is Carter Gill and I am Vice President of Governmental Affairs for the North Dakota Student Association. I am here today in support of SB 2147.

The North Dakota Student Association is dedicated to ensuring that students have a voice at the table in policy that affects higher education. We consist of delegates from each of the 11 public North Dakota University System (NDUS) institutions, meeting monthly to engage students in discussions about North Dakota higher education policy. Since 1969, our mission has been to empower students, create collaboration between the student bodies of the North Dakota public universities, and to provide a student perspective on higher education policy.

In recent years, the NDSA passed [NDSA-01-2425](#): A Resolution in Support of the NDSA's Legislative Priorities for the 25-27 Biennium, and [NDSA-01-2324](#): A Resolution In Support of Affordable Higher Education. Both resolutions detail the NDSA's hopes that our students will continue to be supported through the financial means of the state. In these resolutions, we state that "Incentivizing students to attend NDUS institutions by increasing the affordability of the NDUS through supporting scholarships and grants comparable to others in the region and to workforce needs." There are many barriers to our students that are not limited to just the affordability of school;. However, alleviating a consistent financial issue for students problem would go a long way to helping students who have other financial issues and must choose between their studies and basic needs such as food or rent. This \$12.2M appropriation for grants would go a long way in both assisting students in their pursuit of higher education but also an investment in North Dakota's future workforce.

The NDSA would like to stress our support for the state of North Dakota to continue to increase the affordability and accessibility of higher education. The appropriations provided in this bill is another step in reaching this goal. The NDSA has long held the stance that “decreased enrollment rates in higher education will harm the economy of North Dakota in the long-term.” Any spending on scholarships, loan repayment programs, and grants goes a long way to creating a more diverse and professional workforce by expanding the accessibility of higher education.

With all of this considered, on behalf of the NDSA, I ask this committee to give SB 2147 a DO PASS recommendation.