



SB 2242

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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 opposition to SB 2242.

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.

Regarding the majority of this bill, the NDSA is always in favor of efficiency and expansion of services. However, the NDSA is opposed to Section 1.1.e: Consideration of the feasibility and desirability of consolidating colleges and universities and implementing satellite campuses of universities. In this academic year, the NDSA Executive team has visited 10 of the 11 NDUS institutions. In those visits, we met with students, student government organizations, staff, faculty, and administrators. A question we asked all of those that we met with was “Why did you chose this institution?” The most common response was the individuality and uniqueness of their institution. A concern of the NDSA is that turning an institution into a satellite campus of a larger institution could break down that individuality of these smaller institutions.

Regarding Section 1.1.c: An analysis of the cost of tuition and fees for students, it is important to note that in the creation and management of student fees, students play an integral role in establishing the fee amounts and the raising and lowering of them. A concern of the NDSA is

that there may be unintended consequences on departments that rely on student fees if the legislative management committee doesn't agree with where the funds are going even though these fees and their allocations are approved by students. The NDSA is also concerned that the legislature may use this committee to dictate where student fees can and can't go.

Should this bill pass, and if this management board is selected, the NDSA asks that this committee includes a student as a nonvoting member on this management committee. The inclusion of a student will allow for a continuation of student participation in issues of higher education. The NDSA recommends that the student member of the State Board of Higher Education be included in this committee.

All of these points considered the NDSA asks that this committee gives a DO NOT pass recommendation to SB 2242 unless Section 1.1.e is removed, student fees are removed from Section 1.1.c, and a student nonvoting member is added to the committee.