



HB1171

House Political Subdivisions

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Chair Longmuir and members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee. My name is Brenda Zastoupil and I serve as the Director of Financial Aid for the North Dakota University System. I am here today to provide amendment recommendations on HB1171.

This bill creates a new scholarship aimed at supporting children of law enforcement officers, including EMS providers and firefighters. The ND University System is recommending the following amendments to the bill.

On page 1, section 1, subsection 1(b), the scholarship is limited only to those students where the legal parent claims them on their tax return. Legal parent is not always the same as dependency for tax filing purposes and therefore, the following amendment is recommended.

- **Strike the language in lines 13 and 14 and insert:**
- **(1) Who is the child of a law enforcement officer. Written evidence thereof must be provided, which includes one of the following:**
 - a) **A federal tax return for the previous year in which the law enforcement officer claimed a dependency exemption for the student; or**
 - b) **A divorce decree or other court order identifying the student as a child of the law enforcement officer; or**
 - c) **A birth certificate identifying the student as a child of the law enforcement officer.**

Additionally, to provide consistency among all state-funded scholarship and grant programs, we recommend inserting the following statement at the end of section 1, which provides an opportunity for students to receive funding up to the total cost of attendance (COA). COA includes tuition, fees, books and supplies, housing and food, transportation, child/dependent care, and other miscellaneous educational expenses related to the student's education. This is a standard Federal Title IV requirement that financial aid offices administer on a daily basis for students.

“The board may not issue a scholarship under this section which is in excess of the total cost of attendance, as determined by the institution of higher education, when considering all financial aid resources.”

Thank you for your consideration of these amendments. This concludes my testimony related to HB1171 and I will stand for questions from committee members.