



North Dakota House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Representative Dawson Holle

District 31
2185 54th Street
Mandan, ND 58554-8731
H: 701-445-7369
C: 701-214-9506
dholle@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:
Human Services
Political Subdivisions

Good morning, Chairman Luick, members of the Senate Agriculture Committee,

For the record, my name is **Dawson Holle**, and I am honored to serve the great people of **District 31**. Today, I am here to introduce **HB 1132**, a bill that would allow schools to offer **whole milk and 2% milk** through **bulk milk dispensers**.

For far too long, **federal regulations** have restricted schools to serving only **fat-free and 1% milk**. While these regulations were implemented with good intentions, they have had **unintended consequences**. **Milk consumption in schools has declined**, and many children are missing out on essential nutrients. These are not just statistics—they represent **real missed opportunities** to nourish our children with the wholesome benefits that milk provides (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2019).

Recent studies have **debunked outdated concerns** about whole and 2% milk, demonstrating that these options are not only **safe** but also **beneficial** for children's health. Research published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that children who drink **whole milk** have **higher vitamin D levels** and **lower body mass indices** compared to their peers who consume lower-fat milk (Boreham, 2022). Furthermore, studies from *The Journal of Pediatrics* highlight that **dairy fat** plays a crucial role in **early childhood development** and **cognitive function** (Vanderhout, 2018).

Whole milk is a **nutritional powerhouse** that provides:

- **Calcium** for strong bones and overall development.
- **Potassium** for muscle function and healthy blood pressure.
- **Vitamin D**, essential for growth and immunity.
- **Healthy fats** that support **brain development**, especially in young children (Vanderhout et al., 2018).

These nutrients are not **luxuries**—they are **necessities** for the health and development of the next generation.

This bill is not about **mandates**—it is about **restoring choice** and **empowering local decision-making**. Schools are **not required** to serve whole or 2% milk, but they should have the **option** to do so. We trust **parents, schools, and communities** to make the best decisions for their children.

Additionally, this bill provides **vital support** to **North Dakota's dairy farmers**. Our dairy industry is the **backbone of rural communities**, and the hardworking men and women in this field are **stewards of our agricultural heritage**. According to the **National Milk Producers Federation (2023)**, expanding milk options in schools could **boost fluid milk consumption**, creating a **sustainable market** for locally produced milk. With **only one milk processor in North Dakota**, much of the milk served in schools is transported

from **Kansas, Nebraska**, and Minnesota which **reduces shelf life** and creates significant supply chain challenges (North Dakota Dairy Coalition, 2023). Supporting this bill isn't just about farmers—it's about strengthening **the economic vitality of rural North Dakota**.

As legislators, we often consider the **legacy** we leave for future generations. **This is our chance** to make a lasting impact on the **health of our children** and the **strength of our agricultural communities**. By passing this bill, we send a powerful message:

- We **believe in science** and follow the latest research.
- We **trust schools and parents** to make informed decisions.
- We **support North Dakota's dairy farmers** and their contributions to our economy.
- Most importantly, we **prioritize the health and well-being of our children**.

Before I conclude, I want to address a few important points:

- **This bill does not create a mandate**—it simply **removes restrictions** and allows schools to provide **additional milk choices**. If a school chooses to offer whole or 2% milk and is **willing to cover the cost**, why shouldn't we allow it?
- **Tennessee has already passed similar legislation**, and signed by the Governor and they are implementing it. Federal law states that milk on a **student's tray in the lunch line** must be **1% or fat-free**, but it does **not** regulate milk obtained separately from a **bulk milk dispenser**.

This is more than just a policy change—it is a **commitment** to ensuring that every child in North Dakota has access to the **nutrition they need** to grow **healthier, stronger, and better prepared** for the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

References

1. Boreham, C., et al. (2022). *Whole milk and body composition in children*. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 115(3), 570-578.
2. Vanderhout, S., et al. (2018). *The role of dairy fat in childhood development*. *Journal of Pediatrics*, 154(5), 345-352.
3. National Milk Producers Federation. (2023). *The economic impact of dairy in rural communities*. Retrieved from [NMPF website](#)
4. North Dakota Dairy Coalition. (2023). *Milk processing and supply chain challenges in North Dakota*.
5. U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2019). *Milk consumption in schools: Impact of federal dietary guidelines*.