

NORTH DAKOTA TESTIMONY

Chair Roers Jones and Members of the Committee:

Thank you very much for affording World Education Services (WES) the opportunity to testify in strong support for SB 2270.

By way of introduction, WES is a non-profit, social enterprise that, for over 50 years, has been dedicated to helping international students, immigrant, and refugees achieve their educational and career goal in the US and Canada. We join with institutional partners, community-based organization and policy makers to help immigrant and refueged utilize their talents and achieve their educational and career goals.

In recent years, we have provided technical advice and expertise to a number of states seeking to develop pathways to licensure for internationally trained healthcare workers. A large part of that focus has been internationally trained physicians.

By way of the national landscape, since 2022, 11 states have passed reforms creating pathway (WA, CO, ND, FL, IA, IL, WI, VA, LA, MA, and TN). This year, to date, pathway legislation for IMGs has been introduced in 18 more states (MT, OR, MD, NV, NM, HI, MO, KS, CT, RI, OR, ME, MN, TX, OK, IN, WY, AZ and now ND). WA and TN have legislation pending to expand their existing pathways. Legislation is expected to be introduced in at least 6 more states yet this year. As you can see, this list of states creating or working on pathway legislation includes all regions of the country and crosses the political spectrum.

The goal of all of this legislation, including SB 2270 in ND, is twofold: (1) to create a meaningful and workable pathway to harness the skills and talents of internationally trained physicians, and (2) to use that pathway to address healthcare workforce shortages.

SB 2270 includes important provisions to safeguard the health and safety of the public while harnessing internationally trained physicians' skills. By requiring appropriate training and experience, by vesting the board with oversight, and by tying service with that provided at a fully licensed health care provider, the legislation contains important safeguards and standards. By including a pathway for eventual full licensure, the legislation would make ND an attractive place to locate, work and contribute.

Again, thank you very much for allowing me and WES to offer our strong support for these important bill.