

**2025 HOUSE AGRICULTURE**

**HB 1529**

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## **Agriculture Committee** Room JW327C, State Capitol

HB 1529  
2/6/2025

A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact subsection 2 of section 15-10-19.1 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to resident student tuition for peace corps volunteers

3:12 p.m. Chairman Beltz opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman Beltz, Vice Chairman Hauck, Representatives Anderson, Dobervich, Henderson, Holle, Hoverson, Kiefert, Nehring, Olson, Rios, Schreiber-Beck, Tveit, Vollmer

### **Discussion Topics:**

- Service to our country
- Strengthening global connections
- 2 years or more of service
- Master's and PhD
- Document signed by director
- In company signed certificate
- Description of service

3:12 p.m. Representative Mary Schneider, District 21, Fargo, ND, introduced, testified and submitted testimony #35362, #35452, #35646, #35647, #35870, #35945, and #35946.

3:25 p.m. Holly Triska-Dally, Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, testified in favor and submitted testimony #35946.

3:32 p.m. Heather M. May, Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, Bismarck ND, testified in favor and submitted testimony #35913.

3:39 p.m. Representative Hoverson moved adopt amendment LC #25.0952.01001.

3:39 a.m. Representative Hauck seconded the motion.

Voice vote.

Motion passed.

3:39 p.m. Representative Dobervich moved Do Pass as amended.

3:40 a.m. Representative Hoverson seconded the motion.

<b>Representatives</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Representative Mike Beltz	Y

Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Karen A. Anderson	Y
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	Y
Representative Donna Henderson	Y
Representative Dawson Holle	Y
Representative Jeff Hoverson	Y
Representative Dwight Kiefert	Y
Representative Dennis Nehring	Y
Representative SuAnn Olson	Y
Representative Nico Rios	AB
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Bill Tveit	Y
Representative Daniel R. Vollmer	Y

Motion passed 13-0-1.

3:41 p.m. Representative Dobervich will carry the bill.

**Additional written testimony:**

Tristan Larson, Flagstaff, AZ, submitted testimony in favor #35709.

Zoe Absey, Fargo, ND, submitted testimony in favor #35801

Jonathan E. Pearson, National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) submitted testimony in favor #35932.

Berlin D. Nelson, North Dakota, submitted testimony in favor #35956.

3:41 p.m. Chairman Beltz closed the hearing.

*Diane Lillis, Committee Clerk*

February 6, 2025

2/6/25  
1 of 2

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1529**

Introduced by

Representatives Schneider, Conmy, Dobervich, Hager, Meier, Murphy, Pyle, Schreiber-Beck  
Senators Boschee, Davison, Hogan

- 1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact subsection 2 of section 15-10-19.1 of the North Dakota  
2 Century Code, relating to resident student tuition for peace corps volunteers.

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

- 4 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Subsection 2 of section 15-10-19.1 of the North Dakota  
5 Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

- 6 2. A "resident student" for tuition purposes means:
- 7 a. An individual whose guardian, custodial parent, or parents are legal residents of  
8 this state and have resided in this state for twelve months, or a dependent child  
9 whose custodial parent moved into the state with the intent to establish legal  
10 residency for a period of years within the last twelve months immediately prior to  
11 the beginning of the academic term;
  - 12 b. An individual of age eighteen or over who is a legal resident of this state and has  
13 resided in this state after reaching age eighteen for twelve months immediately  
14 prior to the beginning of the academic term;
  - 15 c. An individual who graduated from a North Dakota high school;
  - 16 d. (1) A full-time active duty member of the armed forces;  
17 (2) A member of the national guard;  
18 (3) A member of the armed forces reserve component; or  
19 (4) A veteran, as defined in section 37-01-40;
  - 20 e. A benefited employee of the North Dakota university system;

- 1 f. The spouse of:
- 2 (1) A full-time active duty member of the armed forces;
- 3 (2) A member of the national guard;
- 4 (3) A member of the armed forces reserve component;
- 5 (4) A veteran, as defined in section 37-01-40, including a veteran eligible to
- 6 transfer entitlement under the Post 9-11 Veterans Educational Assistance
- 7 Act of 2008 [38 U.S.C. 3301];
- 8 (5) A benefited employee of the North Dakota university system; or
- 9 (6) Any other individual who is a resident for tuition purposes;
- 10 g. A dependent of:
- 11 (1) A full-time active duty member of the armed forces;
- 12 (2) A member of the national guard;
- 13 (3) A member of the armed forces reserve component;
- 14 (4) A veteran, as defined in section 37-01-40, including a veteran eligible to
- 15 transfer entitlement under the Post 9-11 Veterans Educational Assistance
- 16 Act of 2008 [38 U.S.C. 3301]; or
- 17 (5) A benefited employee of the North Dakota university system;
- 18 h. An individual who was a legal resident of this state for at least three consecutive
- 19 years within six years of the beginning of the academic term;
- 20 i. A child, spouse, widow, or widower of a veteran as defined in section 37-01-40
- 21 who was killed in action or died from wounds or other service-connected causes,
- 22 was totally disabled as a result of service-connected causes, died from
- 23 service-connected disabilities, was a prisoner of war, or was declared missing in
- 24 action; or
- 25 j. A covered individual as defined by section 702 of Public Law No. 113-146 [128
- 26 Stat. 1797; 38 U.S.C. 3679]; or
- 27 k. An individual certified by the director of the peace corps as having served
- 28 satisfactorily completed service as a peace corps volunteer.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
HB 1529**

**Agriculture Committee (Rep. Beltz, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.0952.01001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1529 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.



Lois Schneider &lt;lois1117@gmail.com&gt;

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**testimony**

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**Lois Schneider** <lois1117@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 4 at 8:34 PM

To: Lois Schneider &lt;lois1117@gmail.com&gt;

Good morning, Chairman Beltz, members of the committee, and esteemed colleagues. My name is Lois Schneider, and I am a lifelong resident of North Dakota. It is an honor to speak in support of House Bill 1529, which would qualify former Peace Corps volunteers for in-state tuition at North Dakota's colleges and universities.

This bill is more than just a financial incentive for returning Peace Corps volunteers; it is a strategic opportunity to attract civic-minded individuals who embody the values of service, resilience, and global perspective to North Dakota.

Nearly a quarter of a million Americans have served in more than 140 countries at 2600 sites, including 600 North Dakotans. Currently 3,500 are serving in 60 countries. Most will have bachelor's degree. They would be expected to excel in higher education.

I had the privilege of serving in the United States Peace Corps from 1968 to 1970, working in India in health and nutrition at a primary teacher education school. Before that, I was a proud student at North Dakota State University. Those years at NDSU instilled in me the values of leadership and community that carried me through my Peace Corps service and beyond.

After completing my service and furthering my education in graduate school, I made the intentional decision to return to North Dakota. Here, I raised a family and continued to serve my home state as a public employee. I can say with confidence that my Peace Corps experience enriched not only my life but also the lives of those I served in North Dakota.

HB1529 is a simple yet impactful way to recruit talented, service-oriented individuals to North Dakota. Former Peace Corps volunteers are uniquely equipped to contribute to our state in the following ways:

## 1. Strengthening Our Workforce:

Peace Corps alumni possess critical skills in education, public health, agriculture, and community development—sectors that are vital to North Dakota's economy. These individuals are problem-solvers who adapt to challenges and work collaboratively, traits that make them valuable contributors to our communities.

## 2. Enriching Campus and Community Life:

By offering in-state tuition, North Dakota can attract individuals with unique experiences and perspectives. These students bring global insights and cultural competence that enhance the learning environment for all students. Their presence fosters the kind of innovation and understanding that helps prepare North Dakota's students to thrive in an interconnected world.

## 3. Supporting Rural Revitalization:

North Dakota faces challenges in retaining and recruiting residents, particularly in rural areas. Peace Corps volunteers are accustomed to living in remote and underserved communities. Their commitment to service and adaptability makes them ideal candidates to settle in and contribute to rural communities across the state.

## 4. Aligning with North Dakota Values:

The spirit of the Peace Corps—service, perseverance, and a commitment to making a difference—resonates deeply with the values of North Dakotans. As someone who has lived these values in both my service and my return to North Dakota, I know firsthand the mutual benefits of creating opportunities for individuals who share this mindset to join our communities.

Offering in-state tuition to former Peace Corps volunteers is a small investment with a significant return. It sends a clear message that North Dakota values service and is committed to building a vibrant, inclusive future by attracting individuals who are ready to roll up their sleeves and make a difference.

HB1529 honors the legacy of service while ensuring that North Dakota remains a welcoming and innovative state. I urge you to vote in favor of this bill and take this meaningful step toward enriching our colleges, communities, and workforce with talented, civic-minded individuals who have already demonstrated their commitment to service.



Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lois Schneider

210 11th St N #103

Fargo, ND 58102

[lois1117@gmail.com](mailto:lois1117@gmail.com)

I am happy to answer any questions.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**For More Information:**

Name of Contact: Sarah LaBounty

Phone Number of Contact: 720.326.8896

Email of Contact: sarah.labounty@gmail.com

**Colorado Law Gives All Peace Corps Volunteers In-state Tuition**

(May 11, 2023) The close of the 2023 state legislative session included a victory for those who have served as Peace Corps Volunteers and wish to further their education.

Colorado Senate Bill 23-096 grants in-state tuition to all Returned Peace Corps Volunteers regardless of where they lived prior to their service. In the past, volunteers moving or returning to Colorado from their two years of overseas service were not eligible for in-state tuition because of the state's one year residency requirement. Senate Bill 23-096 includes an exemption for all Peace Corps Volunteers from the residency requirement. Colorado is the second state to recognize the service of Peace Corps Volunteers in this way.

"The hope is that in-state tuition will encourage returning Peace Corps Volunteers to seek graduate programs here in Colorado," said Colorado State Representative Judy Amabile, who co-sponsored the bill in the House. "Not only is this a great way to thank those who have given so much in service to our country and the world, but our Colorado universities will be made richer by their enrollment." The bipartisan bill was also co-sponsored by State Representative Matt Soper and Senators Dylan Roberts and Paul Lundeen. The bill passed unanimously in the Senate and had only four dissenting votes in the House. Governor Jared Polis signed the bill into law on April 11, 2023.

This initiative received the full support of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Colorado (RPCVCO), a membership organization dedicated to connecting and supporting the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer community in Colorado. "We see this as a statewide win not only for our current community, but for those who have yet to complete service and move to Colorado," said

RPCVCO President, Samantha Temple. “And, we hope that as an organization we can help Colorado universities connect with returning volunteers to see the full benefit of this legislation.”

National Peace Corps Association (NPCA), the nationwide, non-profit organization representing the Peace Corps community, also praised this legislative victory. “We congratulate Colorado as the latest state to set a standard of how to recognize and honor Peace Corps Volunteers for their service,” said NPCA President & CEO Dan Baker. “We thank the sponsors who guided this legislation to passage, Governor Polis for signing the bill into law, and the dedicated members of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Colorado for being a strong voice of support for the next generation of volunteers.”

Colorado has a long, proud history of recruiting and sending Peace Corps Volunteers overseas. The state historically ranks tenth in the nation, with just over 7,300 Peace Corps Volunteers since 1961. Colorado College, Colorado State University, and University of Colorado Boulder all ranked high in the most recent rankings of schools recruiting Peace Corps Volunteers. CU Boulder also ranks fifth in the nation historically, sending more than 2,500 graduates into Peace Corps service.

## INTRODUCTION

By Representative Mary Schneider  
of  
HB 1529

House Agriculture Committee--Mike Beltz, Chairman

February 6, 2025

Chairman Beltz and distinguished members of the Agriculture Committee:

I am Mary Schneider, and I proudly represent District 21, central Fargo and West Fargo.

HB 1529 is a bill that would add returning Peace Corps volunteers, who have served their country in positions assigned to them around the world, to a long list of others who we consider "resident students" for tuition purposes. That list can be found in subsection 2 of section 15-10-19.1 of the Century Code.

The current list of individuals who meet that "resident student" definition includes a broad range of military categories including the armed services, the national guard, reservists, plus their spouses, surviving spouses, their children. Also, residents for tuition purposes are benefitted employees of our university system, and their spouses and children.

All those individuals are deserving, I'm sure, so I am only asking that you slightly modify the list to include one small additional group of individuals who served their country, often amidst hardship, isolation, and limited income, in foreign countries, and sometimes dangerous circumstances. Those are returning Peace Corps volunteers who completed at least two years of federal service for their country--making the world a better place. This small ask doesn't include spouses or children, and it's on behalf of people who don't ask for much.

In our state we have many groups that represent and speak for veterans--rightly so, too. We have the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs, we have the ND Department of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans Administration, to name a few. North Dakota Peace Corps veterans don't have any groups in our state that speak for them, or maybe they would have been welcomed to the "resident students" list years ago.

The **Peace Corps** is a volunteer program, run by the U.S. government which has been supported and funded by Presidents and Congresses of both parties. Its purpose is to promote world peace by sending American citizens abroad to work on a variety of development projects in areas like education, health, agriculture, environment, and economic development. Unlike most military servicemen, volunteers don't have the support and resources of a large organization when they are on assignment. They may be mostly alone, facing barriers of language, culture, and poverty when undertaking their missions. They may live in risky conditions, and can be exposed to unusual hazards, environmental conditions, and diseases. Volunteers live and work in communities for at least two years, helping to address local needs and foster cross-cultural

understanding. They are usually armed with training in the language, culture, and technical skills required for their assignments--and which has value for a lifetime.

When Peace Corps volunteers leave for duty, almost all already have college degrees, and they return to the U.S. with additional valuable skills and experiences that can greatly benefit their states and local communities. Many are interested in further education to continue their professional development, but the financial burden of graduate school tuition can be a challenge.

In North Dakota, the decision to offer in-state tuition to returning Peace Corps volunteers is important for many reasons:

1. **Losing Lifelong North Dakotans:** North Dakota kids who have grown up here, who temporarily leave the state for school or another shorter-term reason, and then join the Peace Corps, can lose their residency while serving. If they must pay out-of-state tuition on returning, they have a lot of other choices--for example Maryland and Colorado have this provision so they could be considered residents there.
2. **Workforce Recruitment and Retention of Skilled Workers:** Peace Corps volunteers often return with valuable experiences in leadership, cross-cultural communication, problem-solving, and various technical skills. Two major categories of Peace Corps projects are teaching and agriculture. We need workers in both categories and have great university programs in those areas. By offering in-state tuition, North Dakota is encouraging these individuals to come to the state or stay in the state after finishing school, where they can contribute to local communities, businesses, schools, farming, and organizations that need their expertise.
3. **Encouragement for Further Education:** Many returning Peace Corps volunteers seek higher education to build on the skills they developed while volunteering. In-state tuition makes it more affordable for them to pursue these educational opportunities, which can enhance their ability to continue making a positive impact both in North Dakota and beyond.
4. **Strengthening North Dakota's Global Connections:** North Dakota sometimes feels like a small, rural state, and having individuals who have lived and worked internationally adds valuable global perspective. These volunteers can bring new ideas, innovations, and connections to the state, benefiting local industries, businesses, and international relations.
5. **Community and Economic Growth:** Returning volunteers often become leaders in their communities, in education, and in business. By supporting their continued education through in-state tuition, North Dakota fosters the development of a highly skilled, management and leadership-oriented, workforce that can help drive the state's economic growth.
6. **Recognition of Service:** Offering in-state tuition is a way of honoring the service that Peace Corps volunteers have given to communities both domestically and abroad. These individuals have dedicated themselves to solving global challenges and offering them a reduced tuition rate is a gesture of gratitude for their service.

In short, allowing in-state tuition for returning Peace Corps volunteers not only helps these individuals continue their education but also supports North Dakota's long-term development by

retaining skilled and broadly experienced people who can contribute to the state in meaningful ways.

How much will it cost? It's not a huge program and the money that's brought in by mostly graduate students that otherwise could or would go elsewhere, likely is more beneficial to our universities than the difference between state and out-of-state tuition. If they don't come, we get nothing and lose out on skilled workers and good citizens.

For universities it's a win-win, too. They will likely attract more graduate students, AND the Peace Corps will advertise the state's in-state tuition availability, as they provide future planning assistance and materials to their returning volunteers. It's a free marketing program.

This is a small ask, but with potential bigger payback. You can't lose by supporting this bill.

Hello Chairman Beltz and members of the committee; thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to you.

My name is Sarah LaBounty and I served as a US Peace Corps Volunteer in Romania from 2011-2013. I taught English to 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

I am here to express my support for HB 1529 that will allow all Peace Corps Volunteers to receive in-state tuition regardless of their residency before their Peace Corps Service.

Last March I approached Representative Amabile of Colorado about passing a bill after I learned that Maryland had passed a similar bill. Peace Corps Volunteers serve overseas for two years and as a result can lose their residency. Many Peace Corps Volunteers go to graduate school immediately after their service and then they are required to pay out-of-state tuition. In other words, volunteers are penalized for their service.

Being a Peace Corps Volunteer is a service to our country. We volunteer two years of our lives to the Peace Corps' mission to promote world peace and friendship. The Peace Corps is critical to diplomacy around the world because of the cross cultural relationships that volunteers build.

Peace Corps Volunteers are the kind of people we want to attract to Colorado and North Dakota. They have demonstrated their commitment to public service and often times continue careers inspired by their service, including education, public health, and community development. They are persistent, resilient, and resourceful. Volunteers excel at cross cultural relationship-building and communication.

I urge you to pass this bipartisan bill so that higher education is more affordable for all Peace Corps Volunteers.

## **House**

Hello Madame Chairwoman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

My name is Sarah LaBounty and I served as a US Peace Corps Volunteer in Romania from 2011-2013. I taught English to 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

I am here to express my support this bill which will allow all Peace Corps Volunteers to receive in-state tuition in Colorado regardless of their residency before their Peace Corps Service.

Last March I approached Representative Amabile about passing this bill after I learned that Maryland had passed a similar bill. Peace Corps Volunteers serve overseas for two years and as a result can lose their residency. Many Peace Corps Volunteers go to graduate school immediately after their service and then they are required to pay out-of-state tuition. In other words, volunteers are penalized for their service.

Being a Peace Corps Volunteer is a service to our country. We volunteer two years of our lives to the Peace Corps' mission to promote world peace and friendship. The Peace Corps is critical to diplomacy around the world because of the cross cultural relationships that volunteers build.

Peace Corps Volunteers are the kind of people we want to attract to Colorado. They have demonstrated their commitment to public service and often times continue careers inspired by their service, including education, public health, and community development. They are persistent, resilient, and resourceful. Volunteers excel at cross cultural relationship-building and communication.

Currently, Colorado offers in-state tuition to many worthy groups including veterans, the Colorado National Guard, Native Americans with tribal ties to Colorado, and Olympic Athletes. Peace Corps Volunteers should join this group. They provide a service to our country, and this service can result in losing their residency.

I am so proud that the Senate passed this bill unanimously. I hope that you will also pass this bipartisan bill and encourage your colleagues to do so too. Thank you.



My name is Tristan Larson; I'm a former North Dakota resident and Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, and I am writing in support of HB 1529.

When I returned from my Peace Corps service as an education extension worker in Tanzania I was unsure of how I wanted the next chapter of my life to unfold. I eventually decided that furthering my education as an engineer would be the best use of my time and help me achieve my career goals. I was drawn to the state of Pennsylvania through a graduate program at Villanova University which funded my studies in exchange for my work in a mentorship role for undergraduate students interested in international development. This opportunity was provided to me because of my Peace Corps service.

This decision proved to be the right one - working with Villanova was an enriching experience for me as well as the undergraduate engineering students that I mentored, and led to my current position as a civil engineer with the US Forest Service. Without the incentive of tuition assistance, this career path would not have opened to me.

Providing Returned Peace Corps Volunteers with tuition assistance is a good investment - we are a passionate and motivated group of professionals who are driven to make a positive difference in the world, many of whom would be happy to find opportunities to contribute to North Dakota collegiate academics and communities. Incentivizing Returned Peace Corps Volunteers to come to North Dakota will improve the educational ecosystem while also providing career development opportunities for those Volunteers.

HB 1529 would be a step forward for North Dakota in attracting and retaining talent. I support passing this bill, and would encourage North Dakota's representatives to do the same.

Agriculture Committee Hearing

February 6th, 2025

HB 1529- Testimony in Support

Dear Chair Beltz and members of the Agriculture Committee,

My name is Zoe Absey, and I am writing in strong support of HB 1529. As a returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) (Rwanda, 2017–2019), I know firsthand how important it is to have opportunities to further your education after completing service. When I finished my time in the Peace Corps, I chose to pursue my master's degree at Boston College because they offered scholarships specifically for RPCV's. Due to the pandemic and doing my masters online, I have stayed in North Dakota and used the skills I learned in the Peace Corps in a variety of roles such as working for the Great Plains Food Bank, creating food access across the state and currently at the YWCA Cass Clay making sure we provide adequate shelter and housing to those that are fleeing violence and experiencing homelessness.

Providing resident student tuition for returned Peace Corps Volunteers would not only help those of us who have dedicated years to international service access affordable education, but it would also attract talented, mission-driven individuals to North Dakota. Peace Corps Volunteers are known for being adaptable, innovative, ambitious, and deeply committed to community service—qualities that align with North Dakota's values and workforce needs. Offering this opportunity could encourage RPCVs to stay in the state long-term, contributing their skills and passion to local communities, businesses, and public service.

I urge you to support HB 1529 and recognize the value that returned Peace Corps Volunteers bring to North Dakota.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony,

Zoe Absey

**Schneider, Mary**

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**From:** Patricia Conrad <patriciaryanconrad@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 5, 2025 10:11 PM  
**To:** Schneider, Mary  
**Subject:** HB 1529

You don't often get email from patriciaryanconrad@msn.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Mary, please feel free to share these remarks with the other members of the House Agriculture Committee.

I am sorry that I am unable to attend Thursday's hearing on this bill, but I have 2 prior commitments. My husband would have been here had he still been alive. I am 100% in favor of giving in-state tuition for graduate study to individuals who have successfully completed their Peace Corps assignment, as is currently being done for other targeted groups.

I was not a Peace Corps volunteer, but my husband Dean Conrad was. Dean served from the fall of 1967 to the spring of 1970 in small towns along the Amazon River in Brazil. Most of the guys in his group (and they were all males) had agricultural backgrounds, but Dean was a city boy. He was assigned to this particular Peace Corps group because of his master's degree in marketing and finance. The Brazilian government had asked Peace Corps to come to this area of Brazil to help the local farmers understand how to operate their newly formed cooperatives. Where here in the US cooperatives were initiated by the farmers themselves, in Brazil the government formed the cooperatives from the top down and forced the farmers to participate. Dean's job was to explain the benefits of working together cooperatively to buy and sell their products. He used his knowledge of the cooperative movement here in North Dakota and his education to train cooperative members in basic bookkeeping and accounting, while making sure that they understood why the government felt that cooperatives would be beneficial for their community. And he did this in the Portuguese language that he learned while in Peace Corps training.

What I noticed from my interactions over the years with Dean and other members of his Peace Corps group was that they were problem solvers who saw themselves as world citizens, who understood the value of hard work and working for something other than just profit. They gave back to their communities and understood the value of helping those who were not as fortunate as themselves.

These are the kind of individuals we want settling in our state. And we know that out-of-state college students who come into North Dakota for their education, often remain in the state as they begin their professional careers. The small fiscal note that will probably accompany the addition of Peace Corps graduates to the list of individuals for whom the state offers in-state tuition will be more than repaid by those individuals who remain here to teach our children, lead our institutions, and possibly begin new businesses.

Please vote 'yes' to the change proposed in HB 1529.

Sincerely,

Patricia Conrad

Chairman Beltz and members of the Committee,

My name is Heather May, I vote in district 35, and today I am testifying as a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer in favor of House Bill 1529.

I served in Peace Corps China from 2013-2016, extending my placement for an extra year because I loved it so much. At the end of my service, I worked for Peace Corps China as a Technical Trainer, preparing the new volunteers to be teachers. I returned to China two more times during my summers off to train new volunteers until the program closed during the pandemic.

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers are field tested and prepared to live in North Dakota. We have lived in concrete apartments in China with no central heat. We have lived in Mongolia where winter lasts from October to May and we have to chop our own firewood for heat. We have lived in huts in Zambia where the hot, dry season is like the prairie in August. We are responsible, flexible problem-solvers who can do more with less. We are the kind of people who could benefit North Dakotan communities if we come here to pursue our teaching certificates, as I did, or advanced agriculture or medical degrees, and choose to stay, as I, a former lifelong Ohioan, did.

I reviewed the fiscal notes for this bill and suggest that not only would the bill have minimal negative impact, it might also result in positive impact. As we plan our return from service, we volunteers routinely look for states and programs that offer additional benefits related to Peace Corps service and are even counseled about such programs during exit activities like the Close of Service conference. With an in-state tuition benefit in place I believe North Dakota universities could expect a small increase in the number of out of state graduate students applying to and choosing their programs.

I do suggest an adjustment to the wording of the amendment because there is not a document that technically matches it as written. It currently states "k. An individual certified by the director of the peace corps as having served satisfactorily as a peace corps volunteer."

First, not every returned Peace Corps volunteer will have a document signed by the *Director* of Peace Corps. Upon completion of service, volunteers usually receive a country level decorative certificate signed by their Country Director and have the option of sending away for a Peace Corps headquarters decorative certificate, signed by the Peace Corps Director, and the President. These decorative documents are not replaceable if lost or destroyed. Returned volunteers also receive a "Description of Service", known as DOS, which states the dates and location of service, details of the assignment, training hours, and is signed by the *Country* Director. This document could be likened to a DD214 and is

replaceable upon request, should it be lost or destroyed. The other types of certification documents available at the Peace Corps website, <https://www.peacecorps.gov/returned-volunteers/support/certifications-of-service/>, might have the Director's signature, but are for taxes, loans, healthcare, and retirement purposes. It seems the DOS or the decorative certificates would be the documents commonly submitted for the purposes of this bill.

Second, it is not the practice of Peace Corps to state that someone has served "satisfactorily", rather, that they served. The implication being that completion of service itself implies they have met a standard.

For these two reasons, I suggest the wording be adjusted to "k. An individual certified by a director of the Peace Corps as having completed service as a Peace Corps volunteer."

Thank you for listening to my testimony in favor of House Bill 1529.



## 美中友好志愿者

U.S.-China Friendship Volunteers  
United States Peace Corps

### DESCRIPTION OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Heather Maureen May  
[Full official name]

China  
[Country]

After a competitive application process stressing applicant skills, adaptability and cross-cultural understanding, *Heather M. May* was invited into Peace Corps service. She was assigned to teach English as a Foreign Language at the university level in People's Republic of China.

*Heather M. May* entered training on June 30, 2013 participating in an intensive 9 week training program in Chengdu, China, which included approximately 200 hours of Chinese language/cross cultural classes, 100 hours of technical training on teaching English as a Foreign Language, education methodologies and curriculum design, and topics on the history, economics, political development, and cultural norms of China. As part of the technical training, *Heather M. May* completed two weeks of practice teaching in a model school.

At the completion of Pre-Service Training, *Heather M. May* was tested by a certified Foreign Language examiner. She scored a Novice Intermediate level in standard Chinese on the ACTFL testing scale.

Having successfully completed the comprehensive Pre-Service Training, *Heather M. May* was then sworn into service on August 29, 2013.

She was assigned to an accredited institution--- *Guiyang University* in *Guizhou* Province, where she was one of 20 faculty members in the School of Foreign Languages. The school offered 4 years of study and had an enrollment of approximately 750 students. *Heather M. May* served as a full-time English teacher and reported directly to the Dean of the school, Ms. *Meng Junyi*. Instruction was set in formal classroom settings exclusively for Chinese students.

After the first, third, and fifth semesters at site, *Heather M. May* attended two-week in-service trainings in Chengdu. The training provided her with more extensive TEFL, cross-cultural and language training. In addition, *Heather M. May* received historical lectures from resident experts that provided context for the educational and political system in which she taught. *Heather M. May* also used this time to plan secondary projects.

Heather M. May was responsible for teaching the following courses:

<u>Date</u>	<u>No. Months.</u>	<u>No. Wks.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>No. Students</u>	<u>Hrs./Wk</u>
9/1/13	4	17	Oral English	2	165	12
9/1/13	4	17	Integrated English	2	34	4
3/3/14	4	18	Oral English	2	165	12
3/3/14	4	18	Integrated English	2	34	4
8/25/14	4	18	Oral English	2	144	12
10/8/14	4	14	Comparative Literature	1	34	4
3/2/15	4	18	Oral English	2	144	12
3/2/15	4	18	Speaking & Listening	1	57	4
8/24/15	4	18	Oral English	2	92	12
2/29/16	4	18	Oral English	2	92	12

Additionally, during her service *Heather M. May* worked with her students and Chinese colleagues in a myriad of capacities including:

1. Held 6 weekly Office Hours, which provided informal opportunities for students to: practice speaking English outside of class, speak more in depth about sensitive topics, forge closer bonds, and allowed for more technical instruction to advanced students.
2. Organized, attended and led the University's weekly English Corner. This included facilitating the event with a team of 4-5 students, communicating with 4 other foreign teachers, and planning activities.
3. Provided Chinese teacher training and evaluation for International Scholarly Exchange Curriculum (ISEC) Program. In this program, teachers with expertise other than English (Chemistry, Electrical Engineering, Philosophy) must teach their content in English to students who are preparing to go abroad for their final two years of university. Trained 4 distinct cohorts of Chinese teachers, 72 teachers total, in Western methods, Lesson Planning, Building Confidence and Pronunciation. Each training was 6-8 hours, and was followed by a sample teaching demonstration and evaluation.
4. Designed and delivered a 3 hour teacher training workshop, 'Culture, Confidence and Curriculum', to local countryside middle school and high school teachers, through a university-provided, provincially-funded program.
5. In collaboration with a colleague, planned and facilitated a teaching workshop using the PPP planning method for 3<sup>rd</sup> year English majors to prepare them for a teaching competition.

6. Annually, during the 4 weeks prior to the Test for English Majors, band 4 (TEM4), provided additional instruction to students needing assistance in writing.
7. Provided one-on-one, individualized practice for non-English majors preparing for IELTS exam.
8. Planned and held assorted holiday events such as Halloween mask-making workshops, Halloween parties, Christmas parties, and Easter Egg dying parties.
9. Judged assorted departmental, university and provincial speaking competitions.
10. Edited assorted English documents including text for the University's English website, travel books, and dissertations.
11. Wrote the preface for a colleague's text book.

Additionally, during her service *Heather M. May* worked with her Peace Corps peers and colleagues in a myriad of capacities including:

1. Managing Editor of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Newsletter for 2 years. Monthly, attended meetings, edited articles for opinion, tone and gendered language, and coached writers to explore ideas and find their voices.
2. Peer Professional Support (PPS) representative for 2 years. Actively monitored and responded to requests in 'Peace Corps China PPS' facebook page, providing advice and support to peers seeking teaching advice. Responded to individual requests for teaching support. Attended monthly meetings.
3. Planned and provided sessions at In Service Training (IST) and Close of Service (COS), including Lesson Planning for Low Level Learners, Lesson Plan swaps, Nutrition and Cooking, Do It Yourself, and Blog it Home.
4. Co-founded and administered 'Cooking in Peace Corps China' facebook page.

Additionally, during her service *Heather M. May* actively worked to meet Peace Corps 3<sup>rd</sup> Goal in the following ways:

1. Acted as half of the writing team/contributors for blog *Sponge and Slate*, documenting her Peace Corps experience. Blog was a 2014 'Peace Corps Blog It Home' award winner.
2. Coordinated Peace Corps China contributions to Marianist Environmental Education (MEEC) Art and Education Show in 2014 and 2015. Each year, prompted Chinese students and PCVs to submit their work on an environmental theme, collected and submitted the works, and wrote introductory panels for display at the MEEC Gallery. Over 250 visitors viewed the show each year, learning more about the Chinese experience and what China is doing right in relation to environment.

In the summer of 2014, *Heather M. May* participated in a two-week teacher training program on English teaching techniques and language skills for 120 primary and secondary school English teachers from her region. With a team of two other volunteers, she planned and taught a full time, two-week, needs-based curriculum focusing on TEFL Best Practices, Lesson Planning, Western Pedagogy, Confidence Building and Pronunciation.

At the completion of two years of Peace Corps Service in China, *Heather M. May* was re-tested by a certified Foreign Language examiner in April, 2015. She scored at a Novice High level in standard Mandarin.



Midway through the second year of her two-year service period, *Heather M. May* applied for and was granted a service extension of one year.

*Heather M. May* ended her Peace Corps service on *August 1, 2016*.

Privacy Act Notice: The information requested herein is collected pursuant to Section 5 of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2504 (f).) The information will be used exclusively to prepare the Description of Volunteer Service Statement, which will be permanently retained by the Peace Corps. The Statement will be used to verify service performed.

This is to certify in accordance with Executive Order 11103 of April 10, 1963, that *Heather M. May* served successfully as a Peace Corps Volunteer. Her service ended on *August 1, 2016*. She is therefore eligible to be appointed as a career-conditional employee in the competitive civil service on a non-competitive basis. This benefit under the Executive Order extends for a period of one year after termination of Volunteer service, except that the employing agency may extend the period for up to three years for a former Volunteer who enters military service, pursues studies at a recognized institution of higher learning, or engages in other activities that, in the view of the appointing agency, warrant extension of the period.

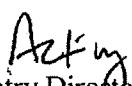
Pursuant to Section 5 (f) of the Peace Corps Act, 22 U.S.C. No. 2504 (f) as amended, any former Volunteer employed by the United States Government following her Peace Corps service is entitled to have any period of satisfactory Peace Corps Volunteer service credited for purposes of retirement, seniority, reduction in force, leave or other privileges based on length of government service. Peace Corps service shall not be credited toward completion of a probationary or trial period or completion of any service requirement for career appointment.

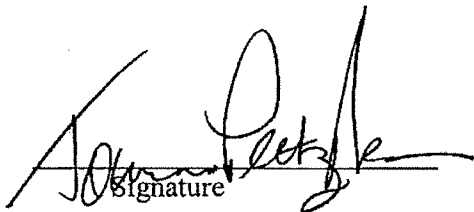
Volunteer

  
Signature

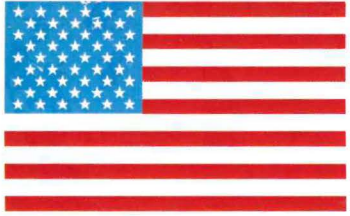
Group

PC/China 19

  
Country Director

  
Signature

  
Date



# 美中友好志愿者

## U.S.-China Friendship Volunteers



**Awards this  
Certificate of Appreciation**

**To**

**Heather May**

**This is in recognition of your completion of service as a Peace Corps Volunteer. Your contribution as a China 19 has directly benefitted your students and your school community. Your efforts in building friendship and understanding between the peoples of the United States and China is deeply appreciated.**

**Mikel Herrington**

**Peace Corps Country Director**



**Zhu Kui**

**Program Manager**

**Date** April 23, 2015



2020 F Street NW, 7th Floor, Washington DC 20001  
phone 202.293.7728 web [PeaceCorpsConnect.org](http://PeaceCorpsConnect.org)

February 5, 2025

Dear Chairman Beltz, Vice Chair Hauck, and other members of the House Agriculture Committee,

On behalf of the non-governmental alumni organization of the Peace Corps community, I write to express our strong support for House Bill 1529, bi-partisan legislation introduced by Representative Mary Schneider.

As you know, this legislation would add individuals who successfully served in the Peace Corps to the list of those who would be eligible for in-state tuition at North Dakota colleges and universities.

Since 1961, more than 240,000 United States citizens – including nearly 600 citizens from North Dakota – have proudly served our nation as Peace Corps Volunteers. Currently, 3,500 volunteers are serving in more than 60 countries, representing the very best values of our country on a daily basis.

For nearly 65 years, Peace Corps Volunteers have served our nation, sacrificing a multitude of hometown comforts, to serve others beyond themselves. Sadly, more than 300 of these volunteers paid the ultimate sacrifice, losing their life during service. These individuals include James Redmann of Minot, who died from a drowning accident while serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in St. Lucia, in July, 1966.

The University of North Dakota is among those schools which is training the next generation of potential Peace Corps Volunteers by offering a "Peace Corps Prep" program, which offers an 18 credit curriculum to help prepare students interested in applying to serve our nation (see <https://und.edu/programs/peace-corps-prep/index.html>).

Modeled after legislation passed in Colorado in 2023, House Bill 1529 would raise the prospect for North Dakota volunteers and others who have completed their Peace Corps service to continue their education in your state, and raise the possibility that they will stay and bring their unique skills to your state.

Among the unique skill sets that are beneficial to states and individual communities? Peace Corps service results in a wide range of intangible skills that are highly beneficial. Peace Corps Volunteers are resilient. They are extremely resourceful. They can work to find solutions when confronted with ambiguity or limited assets. They are collaborative problem solvers.

In conclusion, Returned Peace Corps Volunteers are highly coveted servants, who are dedicated to strengthening states and communities where they choose to reside. House Bill 1529 raises the prospect that more of these individuals will reside and work in North Dakota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Baker", written over a large, stylized, looping flourish.

Dan Baker

President/CEO

National Peace Corps Association

Testimony

HB 1529--Agriculture Committee

February 6, 2025

I understand that you are working on the HB 1529 that will provide incentives for returned Peace Corps volunteers to have resident status when returning for tuition.

I have a son who just started service in Ag extension services in Guinea. When he returns from overseas, he does plan on going to graduate school. I think it would be a great incentive, and very much a starting point for his search to be in North Dakota - so having this kind of status would be a great help.

I did the same when I returned from Kenya, and ended up with an MS from the Ag. Econ dept (Natural Resources) at NDSU.

I'd like to see ND remain competitive with other states, and keep my son and other high caliber and highly motivated people in the state, so they can continue to contribute.

Thanks!

Herbie Ludwig Jr.

701-371-3874

North Dakota HB 1529

TTLE: A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact subsection 2 of section 15-10-19.1 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to resident student tuition for peace corps volunteers.

February 5, 2025

To: ND House Agriculture Committee

I strongly support the passing of HB 1529. Returned Peace Corps Volunteers have served the best interests of the United States by using their skills to better the lives of peoples in other countries around the world. I was a volunteer in Costa Rica from 1973 to 1976. I worked in the Ministry of Agriculture as a Plant Pathologist helping with the management of diseases of tropical crops important to the agriculture of Costa Rica. Returned volunteers bring a wealth of knowledge about other countries and cultures back to our state where they share that knowledge with those they interact with here. North Dakota agricultural products are sold on the global market. Fostering our global outreach is beneficial to state Agriculture. This bill will help those Volunteers who wish to further their education in our state University system. That could be a strong incentive for them to remain in North Dakota and pursue their career goals.

Respectfully submitted

Berlin D Nelson Jr

Professor Emeritus

College of Agriculture, NDSU

1979 to 2021

Vietnam Veteran 1967-1968

February 6, 2025

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota  
HB 1529

**Re: Resident student tuition for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs)**

Dear Chairman Beltz and Members of the Committee,

I am writing as a North Dakota resident who benefited greatly from service in the U.S. Peace Corps. I served with Americans from across the country who were committed to using the education and experience they obtained in the United States to help others grow and thrive.

Peace Corps builds prosperity in the countries where it works, and it strengthens the skills of Americans. I served in Nicaragua for 3 years as an Agribusiness and Sustainable Agriculture volunteer. In addition to secondary projects like teaching English, we established two agriculturally based businesses in my community, selling products to grocery stores and restaurants in the capital city.

The skills I gained, resulting from my service, have propelled me forward throughout my academic and professional career. Peace Corps training is world class. I received intense Spanish instruction, project management training, and learned to creatively solve problems with limited resources. I had the privilege of working alongside incredibly innovative people throughout my service.

This experience was foundational in my career. Returning to the United States, I moved to Washington D.C. and managed education programs for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). I received a Master of Arts in Economic Development from the Catholic University of America and went on to lead their graduate studies in economic development. Today I serve as North Dakota's State Refugee Coordinator, ensuring that those who go through the overseas screening and vetting process and obtain legal Refugee status can apply their skills, contribute to new communities, and make North Dakota home.

Peace Corps gave me the real-world skills and confidence to make a positive difference in my community. During my time at NASA, I became knowledgeable of Harvard Professor Tony Wagner's, 7 Survival Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. According to his research, the most essential skills for success today include problem solving, collaboration across networks, adaptability, initiative, communication skills, analyzing information, and imagination. All the skills I had the opportunity to develop as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Taking steps to attract Returned Peace Corps Volunteers to pursue education, live, and work in North Dakota will have a positive impact on our communities and the economy. The volunteers I served with regularly obtained graduate degrees and went on to hold leadership positions in organizations and in their communities across the country. They are individuals who are willing to work hard for the greater good.

Returned Peace Corps volunteers (RPCVs) tend to pursue graduate level education. Typically, the cost of graduate level education is the same for in-state and out-of-state residents. The Coverdell Fellows Program was established by the Peace Corps to provide financial incentives for RPCVs to choose their partner schools. This resource is used broadly by RPCVs. An additional positive step would be for ND institutions to establish their own Coverdell Fellows program, to attract RPCVs to their academic institutions.

Sincerely,

Holly Triska-Dally  
District 8

North Dakota HB 1529

TTLE: A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact subsection 2 of section 15-10-19.1 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to resident student tuition for peace corps volunteers.

February 5, 2025

To: ND House Agriculture Committee

I strongly support the passing of HB 1529. Returned Peace Corps Volunteers have served the best interests of the United States by using their skills to better the lives of peoples in other countries around the world. I was a volunteer in Costa Rica from 1973 to 1976. I worked in the Ministry of Agriculture as a Plant Pathologist helping with the management of diseases of tropical crops important to the agriculture of Costa Rica. Returned volunteers bring a wealth of knowledge about other countries and cultures back to our state where they share that knowledge with those they interact with here. North Dakota agricultural products are sold on the global market. Fostering our global outreach is beneficial to state Agriculture. This bill will help those Volunteers who wish to further their education in our state University system. That could be a strong incentive for them to remain in North Dakota and pursue their career goals.

Respectfully submitted

Berlin D Nelson Jr

Professor Emeritus

College of Agriculture, NDSU

1979 to 2021

Vietnam Veteran 1967-1968



**2025 SENATE EDUCATION**

**HB 1529**

# 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Education Committee Room JW216, State Capitol

HB 1529  
3/11/2025

Relating to resident student tuition for peace corps volunteers.
--

9:00 a.m. Chairman Beard called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Beard; Vice-Chairman Lemm; Senators: Axtman, Boschee, Gerhardt, and Wobbema.

### Discussion Topics:

- Encourage professional development
- Workforce recruitment and retention
- Recognition of service
- Community and economic growth

9:00 a.m. Representative Schneider, District #21, introduced the bill and submitted testimony #40211.

9:16 a.m. Pat Conrad, Bismarck citizen, testified in favor.

9:23 a.m. Senator Lemm moved Do Pass.

9:23 a.m. Senator Axtman seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Todd Beard	Y
Senator Randy D. Lemm	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	Y
Senator Josh Boschee	Y
Senator Justin Gerhardt	Y
Senator Mike Wobbema	Y

Motion Passed 6-0-0

Senator Wobbema will carry the bill.

### Additional written testimony:

Andrew Armacost, President University of ND, submitted testimony in favor #40343.

James Krogh, Peace Corps Volunteer, submitted testimony in favor #39797.

9:45 a.m. Chairman Beard closed the hearing.

Senate Education Committee

HB 1529

3/11/2025

Page 2

*Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
ENGROSSED HB 1529 ([25.0952.02000](#))**

**Education Committee (Sen. Beard, Chairman)** recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1529 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

As a returned Peace Corps Volunteer, I am in support of HB1529. This bill adds successful Peace Corps Volunteers to the list of people who are resident students for tuition purposes.

After my Peace Corps service, I spent 38 years in the sunflower industry. I managed Agway Sunflower and then CHS Sunflower in Grandin, ND for thirty-five years. My Peace Corps experience (Philippines 72-74) contributed to the success of my career and the businesses I managed. I hope other Peace Corps volunteers will have opportunities as I have.

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers have acquired unique skills, experiences and are highly motivated. They often continue their academic education after completing their service. As residents here they are an asset to our state. Passing HB1529 is a small step to attract them to North Dakota.

## Senate Education Committee--Todd Beard, Chairman

### INTRODUCTION

By Representative Mary Schneider  
of  
**HB 1529**

March 11, 2025

Chairman Beard, Vice Chairman Lemm, and distinguished members of the Senate Education Committee:

I am Mary Schneider, and I proudly represent District 21, Central Fargo and West Fargo.

HB 1529 is a bill that would add returning Peace Corps volunteers, who have served their country in positions assigned to them around the world, to a long list of others who we consider "resident students" for tuition purposes. That list can be found in subsection 2 of section 15-1019.1 of the Century Code.

The current list of individuals who meet that "resident student" definition includes a broad range of military categories including the armed services, the national guard, reservists, plus their spouses, surviving spouses, their children. Also, residents for tuition purposes are benefitted employees of our university system, and their spouses and children. Others, I'm told, are conferred that status in other parts of the code.

All those individuals are deserving, I'm sure, so I am only asking that you slightly modify the list to include one small additional group of individuals who served their country, often amidst hardship, isolation, and limited income, in foreign countries, and sometimes dangerous circumstances. Those are returning Peace Corps volunteers who completed at least two years of federal service for their country--making the world a better place. This small ask doesn't include spouses or children, and it's on behalf of people who don't ask for much.

In our state we have many groups that represent and speak for veterans--rightly so, too. We have the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs, we have the ND Department of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans Administration, to name a few. North Dakota Peace Corps veterans don't have any groups in our state that speak for them, or maybe they would have been welcomed to the "resident students" list years ago.

The **Peace Corps** is a volunteer program, run by the U.S. government, which has been supported and funded by Presidents and Congresses of both parties. Its purpose is to promote world peace by sending American citizens abroad to work on a variety of development projects in areas like education, health, agriculture, environment, and economic development. Unlike most military servicemen, volunteers don't have the support and resources of a large organization when they are on assignment. They may be mostly alone, facing barriers of language, culture, and poverty

when undertaking their missions. They may live in risky conditions, and can be exposed to unusual hazards, environmental conditions, and diseases. Volunteers live and work in communities for at least two years, helping to address local needs and foster cross-cultural understanding. They are usually armed with training in the language, culture, and technical skills required for their assignments--and which has value for a lifetime.

When Peace Corps volunteers leave for duty, almost all already have college degrees, and they return to the U.S. with additional valuable skills and experiences that can greatly benefit their states and local communities. Many are interested in further education to continue their professional development, but the financial burden of graduate school tuition can be a challenge.

In North Dakota, the decision to offer in-state tuition to returning Peace Corps volunteers is important for many reasons:

1. **Losing Lifelong North Dakotans:** North Dakota kids who have grown up here, who temporarily leave the state for school or another shorter-term reason, and then join the Peace Corps, can lose their residency while serving. If they must pay out-of-state tuition on returning, they have a lot of other choices--for example Maryland and Colorado have this provision so they could be considered residents there.
2. **Workforce Recruitment and Retention of Skilled Workers:** Peace Corps volunteers often return with valuable experiences in leadership, cross-cultural communication, problem-solving, and various technical skills. Two major categories of Peace Corps projects are teaching and agriculture. We need workers in both categories and have great university programs in those areas. By offering in-state tuition, North Dakota is encouraging these individuals to come to the state or stay in the state after finishing school, where they can contribute to local communities, businesses, schools, farming, and organizations that need their expertise.
3. **Encouragement for Further Education:** Many returning Peace Corps volunteers seek higher education to build on the skills they developed while volunteering. In-state tuition makes it more affordable for them to pursue these educational opportunities, which can enhance their ability to continue making a positive impact both in North Dakota and beyond.
4. **Strengthening North Dakota's Global Connections:** North Dakota sometimes feels like a small, rural state, and having individuals who have lived and worked internationally adds valuable global perspective. These volunteers can bring new ideas, innovations, and connections to the state, benefiting local industries, businesses, and international relations.
5. **Community and Economic Growth:** Returning volunteers often become leaders in their communities, in education, and in business. By supporting their continued education through in-state tuition, North Dakota fosters the development of a highly skilled, management and leadership-oriented, workforce that can help drive the state's economic growth.
6. **Recognition of Service:** Offering in-state tuition is a way of honoring the service that Peace Corps volunteers have given to communities both domestically and abroad. These

individuals have dedicated themselves to solving global challenges and offering them a reduced tuition rate is a gesture of gratitude for their service.

In short, allowing in-state tuition for returning Peace Corps volunteers not only helps these individuals continue their education but also supports North Dakota's long-term development by retaining skilled and broadly experienced people who can contribute to the state in meaningful ways.

How much will it cost? It's not a huge program and the money that's brought in by mostly graduate students that otherwise could or would go elsewhere, likely is more beneficial to our universities than the difference between state and out-of-state tuition. If they don't come, we get nothing and lose out on skilled workers and good citizens.

For universities it's a win-win, too. They will likely attract more graduate students, AND the Peace Corps will advertise the state's in-state tuition availability, as they provide future planning assistance and materials to their returning volunteers. It's a free marketing program.

This is a small ask, but with potential bigger payback. You can't lose by supporting this bill.





**Testimony for 69th Legislative Assembly – Senate Education Committee**

**March 11, 2025**

**Andy Armacost, President, UND**

**andrew.armacost@UND.edu | 701.777.2121**

**In Support of Engrossed House Bill 1529**

Chairman Beard and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Andy Armacost, and I serve as the President of the University of North Dakota. I am offering my support for Engrossed House Bill 1529 and the adoption of language in ND Century Code that would grant “resident student” status for tuition purposes to individuals who have served as Peace Corps Volunteers.

For decades, the Peace Corps, an official program of the U.S. Government, has served developing countries around the world. Its volunteers are skilled workers who typically serve for several years and receive only a modest stipend to cover the cost of living in their host nation.

The University of North Dakota has a tradition of preparing students for service as Peace Corps Volunteers by offering an 18 credit-hour Peace Corps Prep certificate program. We do so with our strongest support, knowing that service in the Peace Corps closely aligns with our university vision, which specifies the university’s commitment to service.

The proposed “resident status” will enable returning Peace Corps Volunteers the opportunity to attend UND or any school in the North Dakota University System at the resident rate, regardless of the state from which they come. Recognizing their service in this way thanks them and offers them an affordable opportunity to make a transition into the next phase of their careers, likely through one of our many graduate or professional programs.

The University of North Dakota views Peace Corps Volunteer service as truly exceptional, and we fully support this bill.