

From: Taya Spelhaug

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Subject: Support for NDSU Extension

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Taya Spelhaug. I'm a resident of West Fargo, a member of the NDSU Extension Citizens Advisory Council and the TechSpark Manager of North Dakota at Microsoft. Thank you for the opportunity to share my personal story about 4-H and my support of Senate Bill 2020.

What do you think about when you hear 4-H? Maybe you were a 4-H'er or know somebody who has been in 4-H and many of you, if not all of you have 4-H in your district. When I think of 4-H, I think of the eight-year-old farm girl so excited to get involved just like her big brother. I think about the 10 years I spent learning leadership qualities that shaped in into the person I am today. And I think about the countless hours of walking, feeding and showing my sheep that taught me to take responsibility for not just myself but for those of others. I've seen firsthand what 4-H can do in the life of a small-town ND girl and for our amazing communities.

We all want North Dakota to succeed and to do this, we need to set up our children for success and the values, hard work and leadership skills learned in 4-H will do just this. The 4-H program provides hands-on, real-life experiences to more than 6,300 youth in clubs assisted by 2,183 volunteers. More than 30,000 youth are reached on an annual basis through 4-H activities. Also, 4-H youth are four times more likely to contribute to their communities. Communities in which you live and serve

With the state's financial shortfalls in the past several biennia, NDSU Extension funding has been severely reduced and that can't continue. I am here today to ask you for continued support of the restoration of NDSU Extension's budget and any additional funds for Extension's initiatives would be greatly appreciated. I hope you will support the "needs based budget" before you today and help 4-H grow its programs and continue to shape future generations of North Dakotans. Thank you for your time and consideration.