

March 15th, 2021

To: ND House Appropriations – Education & Environment Sub-Division
From: Matthew F. Friedmann, Student Body President NDSU

RE: Written Testimony in Support of SB2030

Dear Chairman Monson and Members of the House Appropriations Education & Environment Sub-Division,

I am writing to express my support for SB2030, a bill providing funding from the Challenge Grant to institutions of higher education in North Dakota. Its programs like these that help provide the direct support to students through scholarships that allow us to pursue our dream of a college degree. Students are becoming more reliant on scholarship dollars and we wholeheartedly support any effort by the state legislature to encourage outside invest through matching funds to support these critical scholarship opportunities.

We, however, do not support any infringement on the academic freedom of our professors and vehemently oppose the proposed amendment by Sen. Myrdal. We students come from all over the country to attend NDSU, forgoing the many other options we have when deciding where to attend college. The core of any college experience is what we learn in the classroom and it is paramount that that information is not dictated by the state legislature. If the North Dakota Legislature were to adopt SB2030 with this proposed amendment, the word would get out that NDSU is no longer a beacon of learning. No longer a place of the free and open exchange of ideas like the American university was designed to be. When we step in the classroom, we need to know beyond a doubt that the information we are being taught comes from professionals in the field and not from politicians a hundred miles away in Bismarck.

As the voice of our roughly 13,000 students, I want to make it clear that while we support any effort to encourage investment in student support, it cannot come at the cost of academic freedom. That is not a price the students are willing to pay when the core of our collegiate experience is the knowledge our professors pass onto us in the classroom. I urge you to consider the disastrous effects this precedent sets on higher education and ask that you remove this amendment from SB2030.

Respectfully,



Matthew Friedmann
Student Body President
NDSU