

**Testimony of [Nate Lightner](#)
In Support of HB 1413
January 25, 2021**

Chairman Owens and members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Nate Lightner and I am a resident of Fargo, ND. I am testifying as a citizen in support of House Bill 1413.

Last year, it was brought to my attention through my union that there was a major problem with school lunch debt in Fargo, and I attended a town hall meeting on this subject, as well as kept up with the news being reported on this issue in our community. I soon learned that this is not a Fargo-specific issue, and that school districts all over the state were struggling with the issue of kids either not getting enough to eat at school or going into debt collections at the school because their families couldn't afford it. This didn't sit well with me that this was happening. I decided to work with my local union and community fundraising efforts to help raise money to pay off school lunch debt in Fargo. I know that many other communities across the state did the same, but it seems there must be a better way than grassroots fundraising to make sure our kids have enough food while they are at school.

As taxpayers, we pay for books, desks, white boards, tablets, school employee salaries, and in my opinion, making sure every kid has breakfast and lunch is no different than making sure every kid has the other things we provide while they are in our care at school.

Family's across this great state are struggling more than ever and they need our help. I don't see this as a cost. I see this as an investment in the future of North Dakota. Throughout my life I've watched my parents and others in our community step up and help those in need. They taught me that when our neighbors fall, we help them up. Well we have a lot of neighbors in North Dakota that need a hand right now.

I can't think of any better use of Legacy Fund money than making sure North Dakota's children can focus on learning. These children are North Dakota's Legacy, and that is why I support a "Do Pass" recommendation for House Bill 1413. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Warm regards,

Nathan Lightner