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Testimony on HB 1441
House Industry Business and Labor Committee
February 3, 2021

Good Morning chairman Lefor and members of the Committee. For the record, I am Nick Archuleta, and I am the president North Dakota United. North Dakota United is a union of professionals including North Dakota's outstanding public employees. Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure to testify in favor of this vitally important piece of legislation and urge a DO PASS recommendation for HB 1441.

Mr. Chairman, if we have learned anything from this pandemic, it is that too many families in North Dakota and across the nation are living on the edge of financial ruin. A study by the Federal Reserve Bank in Minneapolis prior to the pandemic found that 40% of Americans could not afford an unexpected \$400 emergency expense. Too many of our friends and neighbors in North Dakota do not have adequate health insurance. And too many people who need it do not have paid time off to care for themselves or loved ones with serious medical issues.

Chairman Lefor and members of the Committee, HB 1441 will not address those first two issues, but it will help our citizens across the state with the third. There is clearly a need for paid time off and this bill ensures that time away will not be for frivolous reasons but for caring for serious mental and medical conditions of the employee or their family member. Additionally, leave can be used for caring for a newborn child, an adopted child, or a foster child. Finally, HB 1441 will allow for an employee to care for their own or a family member who was a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking.

Yes, there is an upfront cost \$5M associated with the start up of this plan. I would argue that it is a worthy investment in the human infrastructure on North Dakota and will pay dividends in the future.

With that, Chairman Lefor, I will conclude my testimony by urging a DO PASS recommendation for HB 1441.



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