

# MICROFILM DIVIDER

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2003 HOUSE EDUCATION

HB 1068

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2003 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB1068

House Education Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date January 8, 2003

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	x		3280-3362
2	x		00-1719
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Linda Guenther</i>			

Minutes: **Chairman Kelsch** open the hearing on HB1068.

**Debra Huber, ND Voc. & Tech. Ed.** See attached testimony.

**Q. Rep. Meier** To your knowledge how long have Diploma Mills been in ND?

**A. Huber** No way of knowing how long in ND. Diploma mills have been in existence since 1890, but with each development of corporate media ranging from telephone, TV and e-mail they find more ways to pop up more often.

**Q. Rep. Haas** Have there been instances in ND where people were seeking jobs with fake diplomas?

**A. Huber:** I have no direct knowledge of that. But I do have knowledge of a diploma mill that actually has come and asked our board for endorsement to operate in ND.

**Q. Rep. Mueller** Do we have any sense at all how many exist in ND?

**A. Huber:** We do not, however, I can get an occasional request of students who are contacting me to take the time to find out before they write out the check. Is this a legitimate school or not.

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Page 2

House Education Committee  
Bill/Resolution Number HB1068  
Hearing Date January 8, 2003

What concerns me, I don't get a lot of those inquires. And I have no way to know what is going on between the general public and their computer and an off shore bank.

**Q. Rep. Sitte** When you talk about pseudo accredited facilities I think of ACSI, The Association of Christian School Internationally, there are a lot of private schools work real hard to obtain accreditation, will they still be recognized as legitimate? Would that have an negative impact on the diplomas that come from Christian schools?

**A. Huber** We have a number of legitimate degree seminaries that come to our board seeking authorization to operation in our state. And they do hold accreditation for a typical regional creditor. They are in competition with the ones that throw up a web site and offer diploma.

**Q. Rep. Haas** requested **Leann Schneider** of the Attorney General's office to come forward for a Q. Is this as prevalent as it seems and growing, is the AG office doing anything to create public awareness about it to make people more cautious?

**A. Schneider** I don't believe that our office has received any calls on questions and complaints, usually this things are forward to Voc. Ed. because it involves post-secondary education issues. So I don't think we have receive any.

**Q. Rep. Haas** Is this confined to the Department of Voc. Ed. Are the Diploma mills producing other types of credentials beside vocational credentials. Am I correct about that.

**A. Schneider** The ones that this bill addresses is educational credentials and I 'm not aware if our consumer protection division is receiving this type of complaint. My understanding is that if they do they are transfer to Voc. Ed.

**Q. Rep. Hunskor** How often are you contacted by someone who has written a check and realized that this is a fraud.

Page 3

House Education Committee  
Bill/Resolution Number HB1068  
Hearing Date January 8, 2003

**A. Huber** I have not contact with individuals that have invested, There are two kinds of individuals: One who invest knowingly to receive a fake diploma and the other is one who may not know that they have a fake diploma.

**Q. Rep. Jon Nelson** A list of schools that are registered with your office? In reference to Rep. Sitte question on who is credited.

**A. Huber** Yes we do, published on the Internet with programs that are being offered so that there is a way that the public can see who is credited, and authorized to operate in the state. The particular act (amendment) that we are referring to contains 13 exemptions. Nelson requested this list, Huber agreed to provide.

**Q. Rep. Mueller** Are you aware of any efforts at the federal level to address this very issue?

**A. Huber** I have brought up the issue to Congressman Dorgan's office and receive a response that the re-authorization of the Higher Education act something can be done. But it very difficult to enact legislation because a lot of these mill reside outside of the US.

**Q. Rep. Norland** Not all states have the same rules and regulations in accrediting their institutions of higher learning, and what would happen to a person who acquired a credential from one state that state recognized the credential, but move to our state, would there be a penalty for that person. Or a person from our state that acquired a credential from another state and full well knowing that that state recognized that institution and accredited.

**A. Huber** If the organization is accredited and the state has recognized despite that we do things differently. It is very likely that the time that school was operating perhaps they were accredited. The only exception would be the schools that are given provisional authorization to operated in our state. What this does is allows an organization/educational institution to come before cur

Page 4  
House Education Committee  
Bill/Resolution Number HB1068  
Hearing Date January 8, 2003

board and demonstrate that they can meet the state's minimum standards. Given the min. standards they then have several years to grow, evolve and prepare for formal accreditation. They need to have a couple years behind them to graduate students before they will come back and the state offers recognition. So there is a window of opportunity during this provisional authorization, however we expect you are taking steps toward accreditation.

**Chairman Kelsch** state commented about the attachment provided that they are good information and directed the committee to review it.

**Huber** It has been very difficult for states to crack down on this because they pop up in different places easily because of moving their server. Their are no regulations on these servers at this time.

OPPOSITION none

**Chairman Kelsch** closed hearing on HB1068.

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2003 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES  
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1068

House Education Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date January 14, 2003

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1		x	5055-5740

Committee Clerk Signature *Linda Guetner*

Minutes:

**Chairman Kelsch** open hearing on bill.

**Chairman Kelsch** What are the committee wishes? Rep. Mueller moves a DO PASS, and Rep. Hunsakor seconds the motion.

**Discussion:** No suggested amendments on this bill.

**Rep. Mueller** there were some discussions in the committee about some institutions that do not exist anymore in the state. They don't exist physically or the name has been changed. I asked what would happens about getting records, credentials or diplomas. There is no problem in getting those items from the records.

**Chairman Kelsch** plenty of exemption and administrative rules are clearly written, I don't think there should be a problem. The AP picked this on this yesterday and called for an interview. He wanted to know the probability of this bill passing. I told him that I thought it would pass. He was quiet intrigued by it and said this is a problem nation wide. The majority of this years legislative sessions around the country are dealing with this.

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Page 2  
House Education Committee  
Bill/Resolution Number HB1068  
Hearing Date January 14, 2003

Rep. Haas How many of you have had to show your college diploma since you have graduated?

No further discussion:

Call for the roll, 14 yea, 0 no, 0 absent. Rep. Mueller will carry the bill to the floor.

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