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Testimony on HB 1398
Political Subdivisions Committee
February 4, 2021

Chairman Dockter and members of the Political Subdivisions Committee, for the record my name is Nick Archuleta, and I am the president of North Dakota United. I wish to urge the Committee to recommend a DO NOT PASS recommendation for HB 1398.

Mr. Chairman, North Dakota has a history of extolling the virtue of local control; of leaving the decision-making processes as close to the people as possible. There are many in both chambers that are quite proud of this history. Yet, in recent legislative sessions, the state legislature has passed legislation forbidding political subdivisions from outlawing plastic bags and establishing a minimum wage.

HB 1398 represents another piece of legislation that forbids political subdivisions from exercising their prerogative to establish rules within their domain. In this case, HB 1398 will prohibit political subdivisions from establishing paid family leave programs. I am sure that the proponents of HB 1398 are as empathetic as the next person when it comes to understanding the reasons one might have when they avail themselves of any provision of a paid family leave plan. If the issue is that should political subs be allowed to pass paid family leave programs, a patchwork of different leave policies would develop across the state, there is a solution: The Legislature could pass and the Governor could sign into law HB 1441, which would create a uniform paid family leave protocol for the state of North Dakota.

Chairman Dockter and members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony today. With that, I will close my testimony and ask for a do not pass recommendation for on HB 1398.