

Chairperson and members of the committee:

I respectfully ask that you oppose closing the NDPERS retirement plan to new hires.

I have been a state employee for a little over three years. I applied to and ultimately came to work for the state in part because of the benefit package it offered. The defined-benefit pension plan played a large role in planning for my future in North Dakota and in setting my career goals. It will likely be a reason I continue working for the state for years to come. The defined-benefit plan gives me long-term stability without having to worry about retirement. It is a feature that I often bring up in conversation when I try to recruit others to join Team ND, which I proudly do with anyone seeking a new career opportunity.

North Dakota Public Employees Retirement System's (NDPERS) defined-benefit pension plan is a valuable recruiting tool for North Dakota job growth and provides stable retirement savings for our public workers. We must consider the future of our state and its employees. With large numbers of state employees set to retire in the next few years and a statewide workforce shortage ongoing, Team ND cannot afford to lose one of its primary employment draws. House Bill 1040 would close the defined-benefit pension plan and cost North Dakota taxpayers \$5.5 billion. This is a fiscally irresponsible choice, and takes the retirement choice away from state employees, leaving them with only the defined contribution plan. I urge a "do not pass" vote.

Amy Nelson
Bismarck, ND