



NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakota United Response to Governor's 2021-23 Budget Address

BISMARCK, N.D. – Below is a statement from North Dakota United President Nick Archuleta in reaction to Gov. Doug Burgum's budget address on Thursday to the organizational session of the 2021 North Dakota Legislature:

“Governor Doug Burgum did an outstanding job this morning of outlining his budget priorities for the 2021-2023 biennium. While the executive budget provides a good starting point in the negotiations on the budget, it could be improved.

“North Dakota's hardworking and dedicated public employees have proven time and again that despite their reduction in numbers and the ongoing pandemic, they have been able to deliver the vital public services that North Dakotans need and deserve. They have done so in a professional and timely manner despite the challenges.

“North Dakota United strongly believes that every state employee is deserving of a salary increase, not just those deemed meritorious by their supervisor. While public employees have always supported investing in their pensions along with the employer, those receiving no raise will actually experience a reduction in take-home pay if the legislature adopts Governor Burgum's proposal of a 1% employee-employer contribution to their pension.

“Higher education continues to be an economic driver in North Dakota. We agree with the Governor that our institutions of higher education must do everything in their power to recruit new students, but we also believe that our university system will need increased investments by the state to fulfill their missions and to continue their efforts to lead our state in the innovation and diversification of our economy.

“Much appreciated is Governor Burgum's commitment to PK-12 education. While we appreciate that the executive budget does not cut per-pupil funding for the next biennium, ND United will continue to advocate for increased funding for PK-12.

(more)

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North Dakota's teachers, education support professionals, administrators and school boards have done an incredible job of providing outstanding educational services to the students and communities they serve throughout the pandemic. This steadfast service, however, has not been easy. North Dakota's educational community has been under a great deal of stress and that stress is beginning to take a toll. There is legitimate concern that our communities will find it more difficult than ever in the coming years to recruit and retain well qualified and highly skilled educators to replace those who retire or prematurely leave the profession. We believe that our PK-12 schools and personnel are worthy of enhanced investment that will draw the best and brightest into the profession and help to retain the dedicated and committed teachers already in place."

"North Dakota United thanks Governor Burgum and his team for setting the starting point for the serious discussions regarding the next biennium of North Dakota's future."

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North Dakota United is the largest professional union of public educators and employees in the state, representing more than 11,500 public school teachers, school support staff, university faculty and staff, and city, county and state employees. Our association advocates for members in the state Capitol, the Legislature, in schools, on college campuses and at worksites across the state, and in our communities, promoting the great public education and great public services that the citizens of North Dakota deserve.

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