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Testimony of Kyle Martin
Executive Director
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In Support of SB 2272
March 29, 2021

Chairman Monson and members of the House Appropriations Education and Environment Committee:

My name is Kyle Martin, executive director of the Technology Council of North Dakota (TechND). TechND wishes to voice support for SB 2272.

TechND, formerly known as the Information Technology Council of North Dakota (ITCND), was created in 2000 by North Dakota business, government and education leaders who recognized the need to strengthen the state's information technology infrastructure and reposition the state as a national leader in IT. The organization has since expanded its focus to include members from the technology industry as a whole. TechND has over 60 member organizations, with representatives from both the public and private sector.

North Dakota's technology industry is strong and growing. North Dakota's technology workforce subsector has increased by more than 17 percent over the last decade and it is projected more than 7,500 new and replacement technology positions will be needed in North Dakota over the next decade.

The Career Builders program has the potential to serve as a valuable part of North Dakota's workforce recruitment toolkit and can help fill the technology sector's employment demand. By offering scholarship and loan repayment incentives, we can encourage students to pursue degrees and certificates in computer sciences.

It is also no secret the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the state's workforce. Displaced workers are seeking new forms of employment and many entry-level technology positions require only a certificate. TechND supports the changes in this bill that would allow graduates from certificate programs approved by the Department of Career and Technical Education's board to be eligible for Career Builders scholarships or loan repayment. TechND also welcomes recent changes to this bill that would allow out of state graduates to be eligible for the Career Builders loan repayment program. This change would provide an incentive for tech workers to relocate to North Dakota to pursue technology careers and serve as a recruitment tool for technology firms.

TechND recognizes the value of the Career Builders Program, and its potential and asks you to support SB 2272.