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Good morning Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations committee, my name is Lyle Krueger. I am the assistant director of the Central Regional Area Career and Technical Center (CRACTC), the virtual hybrid CTE center based out of Bismarck. I am providing written testimony in support of SB 2019 with a request for a couple modifications.

As you know, there are many strong Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs throughout our great State of North Dakota, both brick & mortar centers, as well as virtual hybrid centers such as the one I oversee, the Central Regional Area Career and Technical Center (CRACTC) based out of Bismarck. Currently CRACTC is serving 700 students within mostly central/western North Dakota, both public and private school students, at 46 different high schools with approximately 923 overall CTE course enrollments (a single student can take more than one course). The number of students, as well as our course offerings, has increased each year as students are more interested in gaining career-oriented coursework and hands-on learning experiences and skills while still in high school. For most classes, we use a virtual hybrid format where students utilize an online learning management system (LMS) such as Moodle, to receive the curricular content and communicate with their teachers (along with other communication tools). They then meet with the instructor and other students at a centralized location to perform hands-on application of the learning associated with the online curriculum or to participate in career exploration learning opportunities with local or regional industry-related partners.

As the need for coursework and programming for skilled jobs, workforce, and parallel learning experiences for High School, College, and Adult Education students continues to grow, the need for growth and expansion of CTE programming is ever more necessary. The interest and desire to provide Career Academies such as the one in Bismarck, has a purpose and I look forward to the ongoing discussions throughout the session. Nonetheless, I would like to request a couple modifications to SB2019 that may help to impact learners throughout the State.

Modification 1: modify the budget to restore the \$1.5 million funding request from the State Career and Technical Education Department for new and expanding Secondary Programs. Such funding helps centers and high school programs throughout North Dakota provide new and current learning opportunities for students that they currently may not have access to, including additional sections of popular relevant career-oriented classes. In the last two years alone, the CRACTC has been able to provide such coursework and learning opportunities to students in areas such as Teaching, Housing & Interior Design, Emergency Medical Response, Coding, Video Game Design, and Engineering. With additional funding to help supplement the costs to implement these endeavors, the learning opportunities would not be able to occur for interested students.

Modification 2: modify the budget to restore the original \$1.5 million funding request from the State Career and Technical Education Department to maintain Secondary Program Reimbursement Rates. This funding is vital to schools and centers to help ensure we are able to cover the costs to continue current programming without going backwards. A reduction in such funding may result in possible teacher reductions, equating to less course offerings and less student learning opportunities.

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Modification 3: modify the budget to restore the original \$3 million funding request from the State Career and Technical Education Department to create equitable CTE funding across all programs. Currently, most programs have a set base reimbursement rate for CTE centers of 40% for teacher salary, benefits, travel, and supplemental consumable materials (equipment is not included). However, some program areas have lower base reimbursement rates such as Technology & Engineering (27%) and Family & Consumer Sciences (19%), which is only applied to teacher salaries, travel, and supplemental materials (benefits are not included). In order to make ends meet, centers may need to reduce student learning opportunities due to a limitation on funding for course supplies and/or increase student-to-teacher ratios for these classes. As a result, teacher burnout and higher turnover rates. This request for the \$3m would help to create equal reimbursement funding levels for all CTE program areas (i.e Agriculture, Business, Family & Consumer Sciences, Information Technology, Marketing, STEM, etc.), elevating the lower base reimbursement rates to help provide more opportunities for students, while maintaining current funding reimbursement rates for the others to sustain those program operations moving forward.

Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations committee, thank you for your time and consideration of my written testimony and request for modifications of SB 2019. Please feel free to contact me at your convenience if you have any questions or would like to discuss things further.

Sincerely,

*Lyle P Krueger*

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Assistant Director  
Central Regional Area Career and Technical Center