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**Testimony of Landis Larson, ND AFL-CIO President
In Support of SB 2169
January 21, 2021**

Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee:

My name is Landis Larson, President of the North Dakota AFL-CIO. The North Dakota AFL-CIO is the federation of labor unions in North Dakota, representing the interests of all working people in our state.

I am testifying on behalf of the North Dakota AFL-CIO in support of Senate Bill 2169.

For nearly a year now, we have all relied on the dedication and sacrifice of the brave North Dakotans on the front lines of our economy to meet our basic needs. We have deemed them essential and said many appreciative things about these workers and the goods and services they have provided throughout the pandemic. For many essential workers, particularly those making just enough to get by before the pandemic, being an essential worker has come with a mountain of extra responsibilities, duties and pitfalls, adding to the already challenging time we are all experiencing. An extra one-thousand dollars in their bank account to offset their sacrifice is the least we can do as a state to show our gratitude for these workers.

Many essential workers have had more responsibilities at work for the same pay, and in some cases even less pay than before the pandemic. Many essential workers have seen their hours cut and their schedules become unpredictable. Many essential workers have struggled to find adequate childcare to meet the demands of these increasingly unpredictable school and work schedules. Some essential workers have been asked to work in conditions that they knew were unsafe, but feared retaliation or losing their jobs for speaking up.

Essential workers in the service industry have seen their take home pay plummet with the loss of tips. Essential workers in our utility industry have been working long, unpredictable hours since day one to ensure that the lights, heat and water stay on as vital pieces to an effective public health response to our crisis. Essential workers in our nursing homes and child care centers have done incredible work under intense pressure to keep our children and our elders as safe and loved as possible. Production workers, like the workers at the plant I come out of, have continued to work long hours in plants and factories and our brothers and sisters in the

building trades have continued to do the important work of building and maintaining our infrastructure. These are all things that have kept us going as people, but have also allowed our economy to dodge some of the worst of the pandemic's economic fallout.

An extra thousand dollars in our pockets would be used to buy food, pay some rent or a mortgage, take on home improvements, or spend in the local economy helping out our struggling small businesses, but most importantly it would put our money where our mouth is when it comes showing our gratitude for the hard work so many North Dakota workers that have put themselves on the line for the good of all of us.

I recommend a "Do Pass" on Senate Bill 2169.

Respectfully Submitted,
Landis Larson
North Dakota AFL-CIO President