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January 23, 2023

Members of the North Dakota House Education Committee

RE: Opposition for HB1363 – Relating to optional career and technical education high school curriculum

Dear Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Lyle Krueger, Assistant Director of the Central Regional Area Career and Technical Center (CRACTC) and I am reaching out to you in opposition of HB1363 as it is currently written.

Today's Career and Technical Education's (CTE) is more extensive and more applicable than ever before. Education and industry are seeing the need and understanding the impact earlier career awareness, exploration, and career or workforce learning opportunities can have within their companies and communities. CTE is not the old vocational education pathway in which students who only struggle with core academic classes should be placed because they're doomed to fail otherwise. Statistics show that students who currently participate in two or more course within a particular CTE pathway such as Aviation, Health Sciences, Information Technology, and more, have a much higher success rate for high school graduation, than those students who do not participate in CTE course opportunities. Why do I start my testimony with that information? I do because I believe that alone proves that a CTE pathway, as currently written, is not needed. Moreover, it is vital to understand and realize the ability for North Dakota schools to implement a new or different graduation pathway within their local district, already exists in two manners: 1) with a board approved learning continuum this can be done with board approval; 2) school districts have the ability to apply for an innovation waiver to be approved by DPI as another alternative to implement a new or innovative graduation pathway. In addition, I have concerns related to the need for a minimum GPA (and at a 1.66, which feeds into the misperception that CTE is only for students that struggle in school). GPA is not a component of the existing of any North Dakota high school diploma requirements. As well, during the last legislative session, members of the legislative body made a concerted effort to remove any specific vendor name within legislative law. However, within HB1363 it lists ACT and WorkKeys score as a factor within this diploma pathway. Lastly, due to the perceived desire to make this pathway available to all students, there may be access limitations for students to the required work-base within several rural communities when relating to specific CTE pathways (i.e. Healthcare, Information Technology, Aviation, etc.).

As a state leader in our legislative process, you read, review, listen to testimony and are involved in a vast amount of different legislation brought forward to you. In knowing and visiting with several legislators over the years, I respect the work you all do. I know you do your best for your local constituents and strive hard to do your best to look for and understand unintended consequences of various legislation before they are voted on to become law. I am fearful that the pathway and requirements indicated in HB1363 would result in just that. I strongly encourage you to look at a possible study regarding this legislation and the impacts this bill may have.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony while reviewing this bill.

Sincerely,

*Lyle P. Krueger*

Lyle P. Krueger

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