

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Andrea Pfennig, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs for the Greater North Dakota Chamber. GNDC is North Dakota's largest statewide business advocacy organization, with membership represented by small and large businesses, local chambers, and trade and industry associations across the state. We stand in **support** of Senate Bill 2016.

Job Service is an important partner to the business community in North Dakota. They provide needed services by helping connect job seekers to employers. In our 2024 ND Economics and Employer Survey of our membership, 70% of respondents indicated they were having trouble hiring employees. Labor availability has been identified as the top business concern facing companies in North Dakota.

This concern is compounded when you consider that 44% of our members expect their number of employees to increase in the next year.

In the next 12 months, do you anticipate your number of employees to:



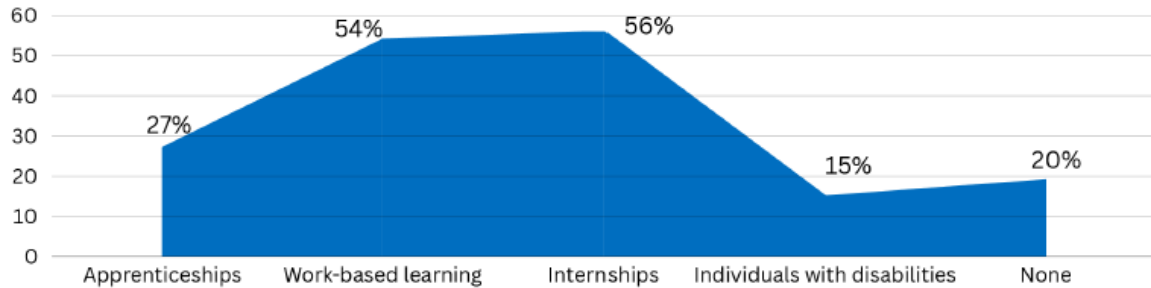
Because of this, we'd like to express our support for the work that Job Service does. We would also like to request that the committee consider expanding the services Job Service provides.

House Bill 1036 was the result of an interim study and would have established an Office of Apprenticeship within the Dept. of Labor. The bill received a Do Pass recommendation from the House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee. However, due to concerns about placing the office within the Dept. of Labor, House Appropriations gave it a Do Not Pass recommendation and indicated that the Office could be placed within Job Service via SB 2016. While HB 1036 failed, we hope the committee will consider establishing the proposed office within Job Service. This would be a valuable resource for businesses in North Dakota interested in creating apprenticeships opportunities, and we feel that Job Service is well equipped to perform the work.

When we asked our members about workforce solutions, only 27% of respondents indicated that they were currently utilizing apprenticeships. This indicates room for growth when it comes to

apprenticeships as a workforce solution. Questions about cost, employer responsibilities, and the process to get started can all serve as barriers that this proposed office could help overcome.

Which workforce solution do you utilize/use/hire?



Apprenticeships enable employers to create custom training programs that meet their needs. They can provide individuals with a flexible way to get on-the-job training, complete coursework, and earn a degree or certificate while still earning an income.

We hope that you will strengthen North Dakota's business climate by investing in workforce development and establishing additional resources for apprenticeships. Thank you for your consideration.