

**Testimony of Nathan Schneider, Vice President
Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC
In Support of SB 2018
March 17, 2025**

Chairman Nathe and members of the House Appropriations Education and Environment Division,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2018, which proposes continuing funding to the North Dakota Department of Commerce's Workforce Development efforts. My name is Nathan Schneider, and I am Vice President of Economic Development for the Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC.

As our business community expands, the demand for workers grows. Bismarck-Mandan's unemployment rate remains well below both national and state averages, making it increasingly difficult for businesses to find the talent they need. Without a strong workforce, business growth slows, and economic progress stalls. Workforce shortages are especially critical in industries like healthcare, manufacturing, and skilled trades.

Bismarck-Mandan and North Dakota continue to struggle with workforce shortages and the Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC feels that SB 2018 addresses these shortages in the following ways:

1. Workforce Attraction and Retention:
 - Funding for Workforce Development has allowed us to invest in strategic workforce attraction efforts, such as testimonial campaigns featuring real people who have relocated to Bismarck-Mandan.
 - By sharing these stories nationwide, we are attracting talent from key markets and positioning North Dakota as a great place to live and work.
2. Supporting Local Employers:
 - This funding helps our business members offer training and upskilling opportunities for employees. This support enables businesses to strengthen their workforce from within.
 - These programs help employers increase productivity and remain competitive in an evolving economy.

In conclusion, Supporting SB 2018 is an investment in North Dakota's future, ensuring our workforce remains resilient, skilled, and prepared for evolving demands. On behalf of our nearly 1,200 members, I respectfully urge your continued support to keep North Dakota competitive, strengthen our workforce, and sustain the growth and vitality of our communities.