

Testimony SB 2019

March 21, 2025

House Education & Environment Committee - Appropriations SB 2019

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Education & Environment Committee, my name is Russ Hanson, and I am with the Associated General Contractors of North Dakota (AGC of ND). The AGC of ND is the largest construction trade association in North Dakota who perform all types of commercial construction (highway/bridge, vertical commercial, water/utility). Our membership also consists of equipment and material suppliers and has been in existence since 1951. I appreciate the opportunity to provide input into consideration the CTE Budget (SB 2019).

As a trade association of a business orientated organization, I am far from being well versed in the important education policy and the specifics of their budgets. The thing I know most about education is the type of learning the trade and crafts people which are employed by the industry I represent greatly benefit from the offerings budgets like the Career & Technical Education agencies provide. Overall, we have always been supportive of an adequate CTE budget but would like to weigh in on an area contained in the original SB 2019 and removed by the Senate.

The Virtual Reality Exploration contained in the original bill is an important element in reaching more students earlier using virtual reality to expose them to a variety of ways earlier in the school years and in a more diverse way than learning about the trades in a more traditional manner. We would request the committee restoring the \$2 million contained in the original bill as it ensures sufficient resources to maintain a sustainable statewide model for early-stage career exploration.

I appreciate the opportunity to present this testimony and the thoughtful consideration this committee utilizes when they address the legislation assigned to this committee.