



Letter of Support – SB 2234

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Chair Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

For the record, my name is Cale Dunwoody, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber). On behalf of our over 1,700 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of SB 2234.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. Workforce shortages remain one of the most pressing challenges for North Dakota's economy. Currently, North Dakota has only 30 available workers for every 100 open jobs, compared to the national average of 83 available workers per 100 open jobs. Additionally, according to Job Service North Dakota, the state consistently reports over 30,000 job openings, with critical shortages in healthcare, skilled trades, and advanced manufacturing. These gaps highlight the urgent need to better prepare students for the workforce and ensure they have access to high-demand career pathways.

Choice Ready grants will provide school districts with essential resources to equip students with the skills and competencies needed for success after high school while addressing the demands of our growing economy. The Choice Ready educational model ensures students graduate prepared to enter post-secondary education, the workforce, or the military—equipped with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary for success. Through this framework, students gain exposure to career exploration opportunities, workplace learning experiences, and accelerated coursework (AP and Dual Credit), establishing vital pathways to meet the diverse needs of North Dakota's economy.

Investing in workforce-aligned programs, such as Choice Ready, is essential to strengthening North Dakota's talent pipeline and sustaining the state's economic growth. We respectfully urge this committee to give SB 2234 a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your commitment to North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Cale Dunwoody
Vice President of Public Policy
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce