

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Ark Spencer, and I am the CEO and President 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 House Bill 1220.**

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.

Our members feel it's important to maximize the flexibility and responsiveness of K-12, two and four-year educational institutions, to provide streamlined and affordable educational opportunities that target high demand occupation training needs.

We feel that this concept has merit and should be explored.