



SB2272 | House Education Committee Hearing

March 17, 2021

John Richman, Ph.D. - President

Respectfully, I submit this testimony in **support of SB2272**. This bill would help us continue to **establish meaningful partnerships between North Dakota businesses and industries and our students**. These partnerships are enhanced by providing a financial incentive through the Career Builders scholarship and loan repayment program.

This program has **enabled NDSCS to enhance our ability to address the critical workforce shortage we are experiencing through attracting and retaining more students to North Dakota**, while further increasing the affordability of higher education through partnering with private business and industry.

Since 2019, the ND Career Builder program has helped fund **36 NDSCS students for a total of \$260,278**. This program has enhanced our Student Sponsorship matching program that matches students with employers. To date, that program has **matched 87 students** – however, with enhanced marketing and promotion we could grow this number. As of January, we have **322 students willing to be matched – but only 57 employers in the database**.

One of the premier benefits of the Career Builders program is that is not structured like typical ‘scholarship’ programs – students are not chosen primarily on merit or income status – but rather are selected based on:

- chosen career path,
- willingness to stay in-state, and,
- in most cases, the connection they have established with a North Dakota employer.

One of the **36 NDSCS students that has benefitted** from this program submitted testimony in support – Trystin says is the best when he closes his testimony by saying: “...*this is the BEST program!*” which has been affirmed by many of the business partners.

As I am sure you are aware, we have stiff workforce competition; more than 25 states and municipalities have adopted similar last-dollar/promise programs – including Minnesota, South Dakota and Montana. Historically, around 70% of students that enroll at NDSCS graduate from a North Dakota high school; the majority of the other 30% comes from neighboring states (Minnesota, South Dakota, Montana).

The continued investment in the Career Builders program would be a true investment in our students and the future workforce of North Dakota. **We respectfully request a do pass for SB2272**. Please contact me with any further questions/concerns you might have about this great program. Thank you for your consideration.

John Richman, Ph.D.

President – North Dakota State College of Science

John.Richman@ndscs.edu

701.671.2221