



**House Industry Business & Labor Committee – HB 1087**

**Representative Mike Lefor, Chair**

**January 12, 2021**

Chairman Lefor, Members of the Committee:

My name is Brian Ritter and I'm President of the Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC. I am here today on behalf of our organization's approximately 1,200 members in support of HB 1087.

We support this bill and the North Dakota Reinsurance program because it's been proven beneficial to our small businesses, which comprise 56% of all Chamber EDC Members. For example, as Commissioner Godfreed has stated, the program realized 20% rate reductions for the individual market in 2020. That's important to our community's small business owners as they frequently cannot access small or large group health insurance markets which then forces them to purchase their health insurance on the individual market, which can be more expensive.

In addition, Section 14 of the bill requests \$200,000 of reserves to study the possibility of combining the individual health insurance marketplace with the small group health insurance marketplace. There may be value in combining those markets as doing so would allow the small group market would be able to receive the benefits of the reinsurance program. That in turn could reduce rates for our small employers who purchase coverage through the small group market.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. If there are any questions from the Committee, I would be happy to attempt to address them.