



SB2272 | Senate Appropriations Committee Hearing

February 15, 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 \$257,278**. 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 last month, we have **488 students willing to be matched – but only 55 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 and an appropriation 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