



WORKFORCE COMMITTEE

Monday, June 24, 2024
Roughrider Room, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Representative Shannon Roers Jones, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Representatives Shannon Roers Jones, Landon Bahl*, Josh Christy*, Hamida Dakane, Jay Fisher, Mike Motschenbacher, Scott Wagner; Senators Jeff Barta, Ryan Braunberger, Randy A. Burckhard, Michael A. Wobbema

Members absent: Representatives Dick Anderson, Jonathan Warrey

Others present: Senator Tim Mathern, Fargo, member of the Legislative Management Jennifer Boeckel, North Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners; Matthew Dunlevy*, North Dakota Unmanned Autonomous Systems Council; Stephen D. Easton, Dickinson State University; Terry Effertz, Integrity Public Affairs, LLC; Rod Flanigan, North Dakota State College of Science; Jay Gentry*, National Association of Workforce Boards; Mark R. Hagerott, North Dakota University System; and Douglas Jensen, Bismarck State College

See [Appendix A](#) for additional persons present.

**Attended remotely*

It was moved by Representative Fisher, seconded by Representative Dakane, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the February 22, 2024, meeting be approved as distributed.

SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE COMPACT STUDY

Dr. Jennifer Boeckel, Chair, North Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners, provided testimony ([Appendix B](#)) regarding the committee's study of the feasibility and desirability of the Legislative Assembly enacting the social work licensure compact. She noted:

- Individuals living in rural communities generally struggle to access social work services within their communities.
- Social workers who receive a license under the social work licensure compact may choose to work in urban rather than rural areas.
- Despite not being a member state of the compact, the number of social workers seeking to become licensed in the state is increasing.
- The cost of implementing the data system under the compact is unknown because the compact commission has not fully developed the system.

Ms. Terry Effertz, Principal Public Affairs Consultant, Integrity Public Affairs, LLC, provided testimony regarding the committee's study of the feasibility and desirability of the Legislative Assembly enacting the social work licensure compact. She noted:

- The North Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners communicates with other states regarding current and prospective social workers' criminal records and background checks.
- Under the social work licensure compact, only the home state has the authority to take disciplinary action against a social worker operating under a multistate license.
- The board contracts with the Attorney General's office to adjudicate complaints against social workers working in the state.

- If North Dakota joins the compact, the board's annual revenues would decrease by approximately \$27,000.
- The loss in revenues would result from the board not collecting a reciprocity licensure fee from social workers located in other compact member states.

Senator Tim Mathern, Fargo, provided testimony and presented a bill draft [\[25.0197.01000\]](#) relating to the committee's study of the feasibility and desirability of the Legislative Assembly enacting the social work licensure compact. He noted:

- If enacted, the compact will lead to increased social work services for rural areas, make out-of-state licensure less burdensome, and result in the delivery of high-quality social work services for residents of the state.
- The Council of State Governments has dedicated several years of research to develop the compact.
- The compact allows a social worker in a compact state to decide whether to obtain a state-issued license or a multistate license issued under the compact.

Committee members noted the compact will benefit military families and the United States Department of Defense prioritizes its adoption.

It was moved by Representative Wagner, seconded by Senator Burckhard, and carried on a roll call vote that the bill draft [\[25.0197.01000\]](#) relating to the adoption of the social work licensure compact be approved and recommended to the Legislative Management. Representatives Roers Jones, Bahl, Christy, Dakane, Fisher, Motschenbacher, and Wagner and Senators Barta, Braunberger, Burckhard, and Wobbema voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

WORKFORCE TRAINING CENTER STUDY

Dr. Mark R. Hagerott, Chancellor, North Dakota University System, provided testimony regarding the committee's study of the workforce training centers in the state. He noted:

- Due to population increases in western North Dakota, the State Board of Higher Education has contemplated adding training services to the TrainND program.
- The state needs to recruit and develop highly skilled workers to meet the demands of the state's robust energy, agriculture, and digitization sectors.

Dr. Carmen Simone, Campus Dean and Chief Executive Officer, Dakota College at Bottineau, provided testimony ([Appendix C](#)) regarding the committee's study of the workforce training centers in the state. She noted:

- The newly established workforce training center funding distribution model would not change under the proposed plan to reorganize the TrainND program.
- If the TrainND program reorganization occurs, all current and prospective institutions will need to communicate and work collaboratively to meet the workforce training needs of the state.
- It will be difficult to launch two new TrainND sites at Dakota College at Bottineau and Dickinson State University without an increased appropriation from the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Stephen D. Easton, President, Dickinson State University, provided testimony regarding the committee's study of the workforce training centers in the state. He noted:

- Dickinson State University is partnering with school districts and career and technical education centers in southwestern North Dakota to provide workforce training and educational services.
- Dickinson State University is poised to offer additional workforce training services under the TrainND program.

Mr. Kenley Nebeker, Executive Director, TrainND Northwest, Williston State College, provided testimony regarding the committee's study of the workforce training centers in the state. He noted:

- TrainND is operated as a business and only 6 percent of the budget of TrainND Northwest is funded by legislative appropriations.
- The proposed reorganization of TrainND would have a negative impact on TrainND Northwest.

Dr. Douglas Jensen, President, Bismarck State College, provided testimony regarding the committee's study of the workforce training centers in the state. He noted:

- When the Legislative Assembly created the TrainND program in 1999, the objective was for the program to become self-sufficient.
- Before implementing the proposed reorganization plan, the parties subject to the plan should consider collaborating with the Director of the Department of Career and Technical Education.

Ms. Sara Vollmer, Dean, Continuing Education and TrainND Southwest, Bismarck State College, provided testimony regarding the committee's study of the workforce training centers in the state. She noted:

- 44 percent of the state's covered employment is in western North Dakota and the TrainND institutions at Bismarck State College and Williston State College trained 77 percent of those employees.
- If the Legislative Assembly approves the proposed reorganization plan, an increased appropriation will be required.

Dr. Rod Flanigan, President, North Dakota State College of Science, provided testimony ([Appendix D](#)) regarding the committee's study of the workforce training centers in the state. He noted:

- At the North Dakota State College of Science, 80 percent of students are enrolled in career and technical education programs.
- Without additional funding, the proposed reorganization plan would debilitate the existing TrainND programs.

EXISTING AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Mr. Jay Gentry, Director of Business Development, National Association of Workforce Boards, provided testimony ([Appendix E](#)) relating to workforce boards and the community workforce index.

Mr. Matthew Dunlevy, Board Member, North Dakota Unmanned Autonomous Systems Council, provided testimony ([Appendix F](#)) relating to the committee's study of existing autonomous systems and infrastructure and the potential implementation of advanced air mobility infrastructure and a regulatory system in the state. He noted the Legislative Assembly should continue to devise methods for implementing autonomous systems to stimulate the state's workforce.

REPORTS

Mr. Nathan Svihovec, Commissioner, Department of Labor and Human Rights, provided a report ([Appendix G](#)) on the status of the commissioner's review and meetings with each occupational board under North Dakota Century Code Title 43, the Education Standards and Practices Board, and the State Board of Law Examiners to establish a strategy to expedite licensure of out-of-state practitioners and revise continuing education requirements. He noted he will continue to work with legislators and the Legislative Council staff to craft legislation to implement the findings of this study.

Mr. Art Thompson, Director, and Ms. Anne Jorgenson Green, Legal Department Director, Workforce Safety and Insurance, provided a report ([Appendix H](#)) regarding Workforce Safety and Insurance's findings and recommendations for statutory changes regarding its study of Section 65-04-26.2 regarding the liability of a general contractor, or the payment of premiums for subcontractors and independent contractors, who do not secure required coverage or pay premiums owed. They noted:

- Workforce Safety and Insurance is not advocating to amend North Dakota's contractor liability statute.
- Independent contractors are sole proprietors and are not required to carry insurance for employees.
- Approximately 14 percent of invited respondents participated in the contractor liability study.

Mr. Kelvin Hullet, Chief Business Development Officer, Bank of North Dakota, provided a report ([Appendix I](#)) regarding the Bank of North Dakota's findings and recommendations from its study on environmental, social, and governance trends, laws, and policies that impact businesses and industries of this state.

Ms. Karen Tyler, Interim Executive Director, North Dakota Industrial Commission, and Securities Commissioner, provided a report ([Appendix J](#)) regarding the Industrial Commission's findings and recommendations regarding its study of the feasibility and desirability of creating an employee recruitment and retention incentive program for the Bank of North Dakota. She noted that while the Bank of North Dakota does not compete with private sector banks for customers or business, it competes with private banks for talent.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Committee members expressed a desire to allow the current and prospective TrainND institutions to discuss and contemplate the proposed reorganization plan before entertaining or introducing legislative proposals.

Chairman Roers Jones directed committee members to work with the Legislative Council staff to craft proposed legislation relating to the committee's study of the feasibility of creating a state office of apprenticeship.

Committee members expressed interest in discussing the draft at the committee's next meeting in August or September.

No further business appearing, Chairman Roers Jones adjourned the meeting at 2:17 p.m.

Dustin A. Richard
Counsel

ATTACH:10