



**House Appropriations Committee: Education and Environment Division – HB 1019**

**Representative Mike Nathe, Chair**

**January 9, 2023**

Chairman Nathe, Members of the Committee:

My name is Brian Ritter and I'm President of the Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC. Please accept the following testimony on behalf of our organization's more than 1,200 members in support of HB 1019.

We support the work of the Department of Career & Technical Education because it's critical to addressing the number one issue facing our members and our economy; workforce. According to the latest statistics from Job Service North Dakota, Burleigh County has a 1.6% unemployment rate and 2,650 open jobs. Using that same report, Morton County has a 2.1% unemployment rate and 320 open jobs. That's nearly 3,000 total open jobs in the Bismarck-Mandan metropolitan area, alone.

What's more is that those open jobs are in various occupation groups such as healthcare practitioners & technical occupations, transportation & material moving occupations and more that can be addressed by career and technical education. Our State has made great strides in career & technical education over the past few years due in large part to the innovative work and support of the Department of Career Technical Education and we want to make sure that continues.

As such, I would respectfully ask that the Committee give a DO PASS recommendation to HB 1019.