

Testimony HB 2021
House Education & Environment Appropriations Committee
March 3, 2023

Mr. Chairman and members of the Education & Environment Appropriations committee, my name is Russ Hanson of the Associated General Contractors of North Dakota. AGC of ND is a 400-member association which has been in existence since 1951. Our membership consists of all aspects of commercial construction - highway contractors, vertical contractors, civil/heavy, specialty contractors, subcontractors as well as material and equipment suppliers.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify today and would like to bring a few pieces of information to the committee as you begin to deliberate HB 2021. The construction and construction related industries are the biggest single premium paying source of WSI premiums. With that, we pay close attention to this agency and are a continual partner with them. WSI is a model for workers compensation nationally. While they are one of only four states with WSI monopolies, they run the agency like a business.

You were provided the details of the agency strengths (good benefits/lowest premiums/ample reserves) and I appreciate seeing this strength after witnessing the struggles WSI had in late 1980s through the 1990's. As Director Thompson noted in his testimony, much of that change is due to the legislation implemented by the ND Legislature and we applaud this past action.

One area we particularly appreciate with WSI is their continued commitment to safety. AGC of ND has a very high priority to sending the workforce home from work in the same shape they were when they arrived that morning. Our association has a very effective safety program, and a major part of that success is our partnership with WSI.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on HB 2021 and offer our support to the agency.