



House Appropriations Committee – Human Resources Division – SB 2012

Representative Jon O. Nelson, Chair

March 9, 2023

Chairman Nelson, Members of the Committee:

My name is Brian Ritter and I am the President & CEO of the Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC. Please accept the following testimony on behalf of our organization's more than 1,230 business members in support of SB 2012.

There are two key provisions within SB 2012 which the Chamber EDC supports, specifically: those related to childcare and Medicaid Expansion.

- Related to the bill's childcare proposals, they directly addresses one of the biggest workforce challenges in Bismarck-Mandan. The ability of parents to remain in the workforce and fill some of our more than 2,700 open jobs is critical, but that's not possible if one parent is forced to stay at home due to the rising cost and/or inability to find suitable childcare. This issue has risen to the point where in our 2023 Legislative Agenda, we support "*efforts to increase the availability, improve the quality and maintain the affordability of childcare in North Dakota.*" SB 2012's childcare provisions do that.
- As for Medicaid Expansion, our 2023 Legislative Agenda indicates our support to "*maintain sustainable Medicaid Expansion reimbursement rates that both provide healthcare coverage to low-income workers and cover the cost of care to healthcare*

providers.” We support these efforts because Bismarck-Mandan’s two largest private employers are healthcare providers. Thousands of employees in our community are employed in an industry directly impacted by Medicaid Expansion; the rates of which cover the cost of care. As not-for-profit entities, reducing those rates can directly impact their viability and in turn their ability to employ Bismarck-Mandan residents.

For these reasons, I would respectfully ask that the Committee give a DO PASS recommendation to SB 2012.