

## SB 2142: Office of Legal Immigration

### What it does:

- Establishes an Office of Legal Immigration within the Department of Commerce
  - Develop a statewide strategy to support businesses in recruiting and retaining foreign labor.
  - Make recommendations to the governor, legislative assembly, and state agencies regarding immigrant integration and foreign labor issues.
- This provides a resource to businesses trying to address workforce needs by employing immigrants.
- Includes \$485,000 for 2 FTEs for the 2023-2025 biennium.

### Why it matters:

1. More than 2 million college-educated immigrants in the workforce are either unemployed or underemployed, representing 17% of the total college educated workforce in the US.
2. Unemployment and underemployment of this group results in approximately \$39.4 billion in foregone earnings and \$10.2 billion in unrealized tax revenues annually.
3. More than 44.9 million immigrants live in the US (13.7% of total population).
4. In 2021, Immigrants and their US born children numbered approximately 84.8 million people. Per Research Center projects that the immigrant origin share will rise to 36% of the total US population by 2065.
5. Births per woman in the U.S. have fallen from 3.5 in 1965 to 1.6 in 2021; a replacement birthrate is 2.1. We have a declining population and will need immigrants to fill workforce shortages for years to come.
6. 17 states have established Offices for New Americans. The goal is to create more inclusive communities and build consensus for developing immigrant untapped talent – they recruit immigrant talent nationwide.
7. Over 4% of workers in the ND labor force are immigrants.
8. In GNDC's recent business climate survey conducted by the NDSU Challey Institute, 62.6% of respondents indicated that attracting and retaining qualified workers is the most important factor negatively affecting their organization's performance.
9. ND's February 2023 not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 2.6%. The U.S. rate was 3.6%.
10. ND had a total of 17,111 open and available online job openings in February 2023, a change of +9.3 percent (+1,460) from the prior month.