

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Andrea Pfennig with the Greater North Dakota Chamber. GNDC is North Dakota's largest statewide business advocacy organization, with membership represented by small and large businesses, local chambers, and trade and industry associations across the state. We stand in **support** of House Bill 1030 as it relates to reauthorization of the Skilled Workforce Scholarship and Loan programs, otherwise known as the Career Builders program.

Recently, GNDC partnered with the NDSU Challey Institute for Global Innovation and Growth to complete a survey about the business climate in North Dakota. The survey found that 62% of respondents felt the number one factor holding businesses back is difficulty attracting and retaining qualified workers.

The results of the survey were reflected in the discussions held by our members in our policy position development process. The ability to have access to a skilled workforce is a critical issue for our members. Because of that, one of our policy goals is to support collaborative efforts between the private sector and educational institutions to better meet workforce needs.

Career Builders is a program that helps enable two and four-year educational institutions to be responsive in meeting the training needs of the business community. It is important to continue to have access to this tool as part of the workforce solution.

We urge a Do Pass recommendation on HB 1030. Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, this concludes my comments. Thank you and I'd be happy to answer any questions.