

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 1544.

Access to workforce continues to be an issue impacting businesses in North Dakota. GNDC recently completed an economics and employer membership survey in which 74% of respondents indicated they were having trouble hiring employees. Additionally, while 26% of respondents indicated they currently use legal immigration options, another 55% indicated they would if resources were available.

**Do you use legal immigration options or visas to fill workforce needs in your organization?**



**YES 26%**

**NO 74%**



**Would you access resources (technical, fiscal) if available? YES 55%**

Our members support workforce readiness opportunities for transitioning populations. GNDC feels that the Office of Legal Immigration has the potential to be a significant tool for North Dakota employers.

We hope you will support the \$2 million in funds to help establish the Office of Legal Immigration and urge a **Do Pass** recommendation on HB 1544. Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, this concludes my comments. Thank you and I’d be happy to answer any questions.