

Good Morning. My name is representative Lisa Finley-DeVile. I represent district 4A, Ft. Berthold Reservation.

I am honored to address you today in support of a workforce grant for North Dakota's Tribal Colleges and the vital role they play in empowering individuals, fostering economic growth, and enhancing the overall well-being of our communities. North Dakota is home to 5 tribal nations. Each offer low-cost secondary education at local accredited institutions for their communities. These grants serve as a crucial investment in our future, and I would like to highlight several reasons why their continued funding is essential.

1. **Skill Development and Employability:** Workforce grants enable our citizens to gain access to training and education programs that enhance their skills and employability. These grants open doors for individuals to learn new trades, improve existing skills, and stay competitive in the evolving job market.
2. **Job Creation and Economic Growth:** By supporting workforce development for NHSC, we can create even more opportunities for a skilled workforce that is attractive to local businesses and growing industries in our region.
3. **Meeting Industry Demand:** Investment in tribal colleges through workforce development grants can be tailored to address the specific needs of local industries. They ensure that individuals receive training that directly aligns with the skills and qualifications required by employers, making the labor force more adaptable and responsive to market demands.
4. **Closing the Skills Gap:** The workforce landscape is constantly changing, and the skills gap is a persistent challenge. Workforce grants play a vital role in closing this gap by funding education and training programs that target in-demand skills, helping us keep pace with technological advancements.
5. **Community Resilience:** A well-skilled workforce is better prepared to adapt to economic shocks and recover from downturns. By investing in workforce development, we foster a more resilient and prosperous community. Tribal colleges often collaborate with the North Dakota

University System to enhance students' academic experience, retention, persistence and seamless transfer.

6. Public institutions: Tribal colleges are affordable and accessible to Native and non-Native students alike.

7. Growth of economic contributions: In 2019, tribal colleges contributed over \$145 million to North Dakota's economy according to the 2020 Economic Modeling Specialists International

North Dakota's Tribal colleges would greatly benefit from the workforce grants are not merely investments in education and training; they are investments in the people who make up our community and the economic prosperity of our region. I urge you to continue your support for these grants, recognizing their profound impact on our citizens' lives, our local businesses, and the overall vitality of our community.

On a personal note. I received my higher education on Ft. Berthold Reservation. I received my Associate of Arts and Associate of Sciences, Bachelor, and my Masters degrees from NHSC. Three of my children graduated from ND tribal colleges with one more soon to graduate from NHSC. My youngest is anticipating attending UTTC. We chose to continue our education at home where tribal colleges are more affordable with low-cost tuition and culturally relevant curriculum.

Thank you. I stand for questions.