



March 14th, 2023

To: Chairman Dever and Senate Appropriations – Human Resources Division

Today I submit this testimony in support of HB1019. North Dakota faces the growing challenges of workforce shortages and keeping our talented citizens from migrating to other parts of the country. Business, education and elected leaders from Southwest ND recognized this and came together with the vision to start the Southwest Area CTE Academy (SW CTE). SW CTE is currently a partnership of seven area high schools, Dickinson State University, and a robust industry group here in SW ND that is committed to offering high-quality career and technical training for in-demand occupations for SW ND. Having the opportunity to work with this group I see the impact they have and the boost they can provide in helping meet our workforce needs.

SW CTE is just one example of thirteen CTE expansion projects that are happening around the state and the hundreds of other CTE programs currently operating in our high schools and colleges. Your support of HB1019 and the requests provided by the Department of CTE will be crucial for the success of these programs and continued growth for career and technical education. This appropriation request is very small compared to the return on investment this will have for decades to come.

In addition to the general budget request and expanding your support of new and expanded program line item, I also encourage you to consider the budget change requests from CTE Director Sick in adding an additional \$40 million inflationary dollars in support of the ND CTE Capital Projects Grant program. We were one of the fortunate projects that received funding and hope to launch programming in some of our renovated spaces in the coming months. I'm unsure however if we can proceed with a portion of the remaining 40% of our planned project as inflation costs are continuing to climb, and the margins are razor thin. We've done our best to find cost savings everywhere we can and continue to work on soliciting private partnerships. To date have raised over \$17.5 million. We are finding however our industry partners are feeling the same inflationary pinch. We went to these partners, schools, and communities with a plan and promise to deliver and would hate to come up short in addressing our state's critical workforce and training needs. SW Area CTE Academy along with the other twelve CTE projects around the state are scrambling to come to life and your support will help bring these to reality and leave a lasting legacy in our state.

Thank you for your support of HB 1019 and the next generations of North Dakota's workforce.

Sincerely,

Aaron Anderson
CTE Director
Southwest Area CTE Academy
Dickinson Public Schools