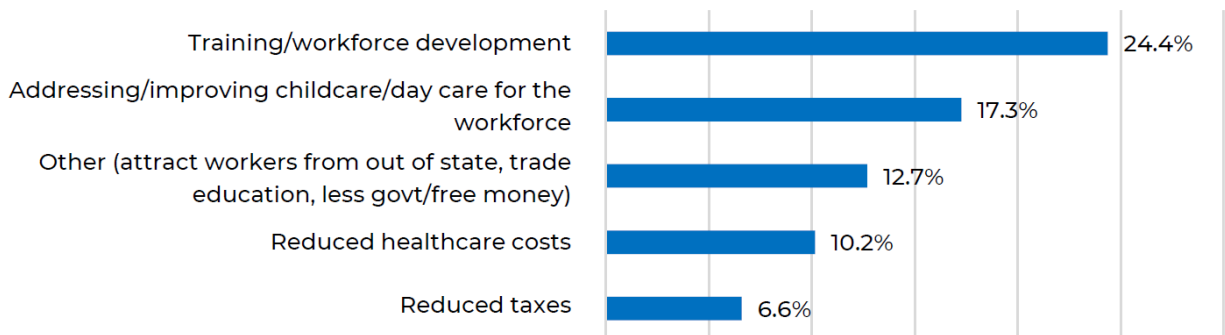


Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Andrea Pfennig with the Greater North Dakota Chamber. GNDC is North Dakota’s largest statewide business advocacy organization, with membership represented by small and large businesses, local chambers, and trade and industry associations across the state. We stand in **support** of the delayed bill relating to childcare, HB 1540.

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. Additionally, when respondents were asked what change in North Dakota would have the greatest positive impact on their organization’s growth or performance, the second most common response was to improve childcare for the workforce.

What change in North Dakota would have the greatest positive impact on your organization's growth or performance?



Additionally, we are aware that 73% of the 44,237 North Dakota households who have children younger than age 5 likely have at least some need for childcare as all available parents are in the workforce. This stat, coupled with the results of the Challey survey were reflected in the discussions held by our members in our policy position development process. The message was clear: Lack of childcare is negatively impacting businesses. As a result, our position is to encourage solutions that enhance childcare availability and out of school time programming that do not increase costs to businesses.

We stand with local chambers across the state, as well as our members from the business community and trade associations in support of funding for childcare. We hope you will support this bill as we feel it is a critical, immediate solution to address the state’s current workforce challenges.