



Testimony of Brad Barth
Economic Development Association of North Dakota
In Support of HB 1030
March 2, 2023

Chair Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee:

My name is Brad Barth, executive director of Forward Devils Lake and current vice president of the Economic Development Association of North Dakota (EDND). On behalf of EDND, I ask for your support of HB 1030 as it relates to the Skilled Workforce Scholarship and Loan programs, commonly known as Career Builders.

EDND represents more than 80 rural and urban economic development organizations on the front line of growing businesses and communities in North Dakota. The organization's primary purpose is to promote new wealth creation throughout North Dakota to develop more vibrant communities and improve quality of life.

Workforce availability is the most significant challenge facing North Dakota businesses, limiting the growth potential of the state's economy. EDND understands that the ability of North Dakota businesses to maximize the potential of the state's economy will depend on their capacity to attract and retain a 21st-century workforce. North Dakota will benefit from connecting the future workforce with resources and education to be placed on a high-demand career path in our state.

The ND Career Builders Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program was established to aid in the attraction and retention of individuals in high-need occupations. The scholarship program also encourages high school students to consider these career paths more carefully, with the knowledge that there will be a job waiting for them in North Dakota after graduation. Developers across the state using programs like this to connect businesses and education will help the task of keeping North Dakota communities open for business.

During a time when every tool to educate, train and retain our future workers is essential, Career Builders is important for the future of our state. Please consider a Do Pass for HB 1030.