

Written Testimony Provided To:

Senate Workforce Development Committee

Charles P. Clairmont

Executive Director, North Dakota Safety Council

March 7, 2023

Regarding: House Bill No. 1232

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Chuck Clairmont, and I am the Executive Director and CEO of the North Dakota Safety Council (NDSC). I am writing to express the NDSC's support for HB 1232.

The NDSC provides community and workplace safety training and advocacy throughout North Dakota. We operate in four key areas: workplace safety, community safety, driver safety, and first aid/emergency response. Most of our member companies are in industries including healthcare, skilled trades, energy, manufacturing, and construction, but companies in virtually every industry within the state rely on the NDSC as a resource for helping them prevent injuries and save lives.

While the NDSC does not explicitly list career exploration as one of our key areas, we have a vested interest in the passing of HB 1232. We know that safety concerns and facility liability are two of the leading reasons that many job shadows and field trip opportunities cannot be offered to students in many industries. Additionally, we believe the early-stage career exploration activities facilitated by ND Career and Technical Education are a critical component in helping the NDSC achieve our vision of making North Dakota the safest state in the nation. There are three primary ways that HB 1232 will help us achieve better safety outcomes.

First, workplace safety is only possible when workers are knowledgeable, informed, and attentive within their work environments. When an individual is misaligned in a career, that misalignment often leads to career dissatisfaction causing additional stress and fatigue, both significant factors in workplace incidents and injuries. We believe HB 1232 will provide students with a broader understanding of their available career pathways and put them on a path to select a career they will find meaningful. People who are interested in their work are more thoughtful and attentive, factors we know reduce workplace incidents and injuries.

Second, our members in the energy sector, particularly oil and gas, have informed us that the perception of unsafe work environments keeps many students from considering careers in the field. Lack of applicants leads to a shortage of workers and worker shortages are a significant risk to workplace safety. There is real risk of this situation becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. The oil and gas industry is in desperate need of authentic and accessible career experiences that show the preventative measures that are in place ensuring worker safety. The experiences provided through

We are dedicated to preventing injuries and saving lives.

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HB 1232 can help reduce misperceptions about safety in the oil and gas industry, enabling more effective and constructive conversations about careers and increasing familiarity and interest in this industry that is critical to the economy of our state.

Last, we have had the opportunity to collaborate with Be More Colorful, the North Dakota team who has developed a cutting-edge virtual reality career exploration solution, CareerViewXR. The continued adoption of this technology will provide new opportunities for us to think differently, serving as a starting point for furthering not just career exploration but also immersive workforce training. We see opportunities emerging on the horizon that would allow immersive VR media to enable environmental safety awareness training in a variety of industries. With the ease of access to these experiences, training can be performed right in the CTE classroom, helping ensure that even before a student steps foot onto an actual jobsite, they are aware of how to mitigate risk and operate safely.

The NDSC is excited to see such forward-thinking legislation being introduced and see only upside benefits of a statewide adoption of VR career exploration experiences. On behalf of the NDSC and our member companies, we respectfully request that you recommend a “DO-PASS” for HB 1232.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Charles P. Clairmont - Executive Director/CEO
North Dakota Safety Council