FARGO-MOORHEAD RedHawks

February 9, 2023

The Honorable Chairman Wobbema and the Senate Workforce Development Committee

RE: Exemption for Professional Sports, Bat Boy/Girls, Gameday Staffing

Dear Chairman Wobbema and Senate Workforce Development Committee,

My name is Matthew Rau and I am here in my capacity as Vice President and General Manager of the Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks.

The Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks Baseball Club has provided affordable, family friendly entertainment to the Red River Valley since 1996. During each summer, the RedHawks play 50+ home games from May to September. Over our existence, the RedHawks have welcomed over 3-million fans to Fargo and Newman Outdoor Field.

In recent years, it has become increasingly difficult to achieve appropriate staffing levels using employees 16-years old or older, specifically in the areas of baseball operations and gameday staffing. These positions typically involve arriving at the stadium an hour before first pitch and end following the game. With the majority of our games taking place at 7:02pm it is difficult to ensure we are maintaining the labor laws by making sure 14- and 15-year-olds are clocked out by 9:00pm in the summer when school is out of session.

These positions are most frequently filled with teenagers looking for a summer job, however this becomes prohibitive when they are only allowed to work 3 hours before being required to clock out leading to fewer and fewer candidates. The RedHawks have roughly 40 dates where this becomes an issue, with the remaining games taking place during daytime hours.

We are requesting an Exemption for Professional Sports from Federal Labor Laws. This exemption would allow us to hire 14- and 15-year-olds with no restriction on end time in the summer months. This would help us achieve appropriate staffing levels while allowing these young people to experience a fun and safe working environment for their first jobs.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue we are facing. If you need any more information, please don't hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Bruce Thom
Chairman of the Board

Brad Thom
President/CEO

Matt Rau
Vice President/General Manager