

Testimony of Rev. Nicholas A. Scotten to the Senate Workforce Development Committee Senate Bill 2151

January 26, 2023

To the Honorable Senator Wobbema and members of the Committee on Workforce Development:

I write in OPPOSITION to SB2151. While it is a worthwhile goal to seek to make North Dakota a more desirable destination, yet this is the wrong way to do it, for the following reasons:

1. Why are immigrants seen as so valuable to bring to the state—at the tune of basically paying them \$160,000 over ten years to move here? They get money for just going to college, or just holding down a job, or just opening a business in the state? No, the market will level out over time. Businesses will need to pay a living wage in order to attract workers, and the extra businesses pay in wages will bring people to the state.
2. This is nothing against immigrants per se, but I see nothing in the legislation that determines whether they have come legally to the country. Certainly, no citizen's money should be going to reward those who come illegally. However, whichever way immigrants come, why are those from outside the country going to get \$16,000 a year just given to them for acting as new normal residents of ND by those who are already citizens of this state/country? Why are immigrants so valuable that they are more important than those who are already citizens of the country, such as our own children, whom we would like to keep in the state and citizens of other states we might want to attract, such that we have to pay immigrants to come?
3. If this bill would become a law, what are the safeguards to make sure that the "right" people get this money? And who decides who the "right" people are? And again, why are they more "right" to get the money than perhaps recruiting workers from those who are already citizens of other states, or just our own children, incentivizing them to remain in the state?
4. If money is ever given like this, I would suggest that it fund rural medical doctors and other crucially missing skilled practitioners—certainly not just for 55 families with no discernible special skills or qualifications that makes this kind of outlay of money remotely feasible and worthwhile.
5. As it stands now, please vote NO to the bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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