



Rod Flanigan, Ph.D., President

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HB 1221

House Education Committee

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Chair Heinert, Vice Chair Schreiber-Beck and members of the House Education Committee. My name is Rod Flanigan, and I serve as the President of North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS). I submit this testimony on behalf of all the faculty, staff, and students of NDSCS **in support of HB 1221.**

As originally written by Representative Schreiber-Beck during the 2023 legislative session, this bill would have provided \$24,000,000 to the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education to distribute to the 11 higher education institutions throughout the state for the purpose of building, growing, and developing innovative workforce programs, initiatives, and partnerships. While I am in favor of this bill, **I still believe strongly that it would be beneficial if there was language in the bill defining how the funds would be, or could be, distributed to the various state higher education institutions.** By adding such language to the bill, it would provide both equity and clarity for how the funds are intended to be used and distributed.

If passed, this bill would provide much needed funding for NDSCS to develop and grow innovative workforce programs. Because the higher education funding formula is a performance-based formula based on credits produced, it is looking backwards 3-4 years. Our challenge in setting up new and innovative programs is that it often takes several years to build enrollment, and thus, credit hours. Funding provided through HB 1221 would allow us the sort of “seed” money needed to build these important programs. As an example, NDSCS is building a new Aviation Maintenance program. We were fortunate to receive an FAA grant that allowed us \$300,000 to begin working on the program. This money, however, was spent very quickly as we began developing curriculum, securing equipment and tools needed, renting hanger space, and all the other requirements for a large program like this. Our partnership with the Fargo Jet Center, as well as others within the aviation industry, has been an amazing opportunity to get the program started, but we need your help to continue to build. HB 1221 will allow us to continue to grow and fill the pipeline with very talented and skilled workforce in these critical industries.

This concludes my testimony related to HB1221. I respectfully request that you vote in favor of this bill. Thank you so much for all you do, and for your support of higher education throughout the state of North Dakota.

Respectfully,

Rod Flanigan, Ph.D.
President, NDSCS

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