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SUPPORT

House Appropriations Committee

Government Operations Division

Rep. David Monson, Chairman

Rep. Mike Brandenburg, Vice Chairman

Testimony of Zachary Greenberg

Interim Commissioner of Labor

N.D. Department of Labor and Human Rights

January 23, 2023

I. Introductory Summary

Chairman Monson, Vice Chairman Brandenburg, and members of the House Appropriations Committee, Government Operations Division, my name is Zachary Greenberg, and I serve as the Interim Commissioner of the North Dakota Department of Labor and Human Rights. Joining me online is our Human Rights Director, Kathy Kulesa, and seated directly behind me is our Director of Operations, Jes Juma.

As we discussed last week, our budget is relatively straightforward, so I will keep my remarks brief. During last week's discussion, questions arose regarding federal funding. Our federal contract with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is based on a three-year average with a fixed price per case, along with some additional training funds. In contrast, our federal contract with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reimburses us for work completed in the prior year, with reimbursement amounts varying depending on the type of case closure. Since the volume and type of cases submitted by the public are beyond our control, we cannot predict or influence the exact funding we receive. These contracts are pre-established, and we do not have the option to request additional funding from the federal government to address our unfunded FTE.

I would also like to provide an update regarding our sole vacancy for a compliance investigator. Last week, I mentioned the resignation we experienced earlier this year. Since then, we have posted and closed the job opening, receiving a total of 19 qualified applications. We are currently conducting interviews, with two interviews completed this morning. Our goal is to conclude the interview process and fill the position by late next week. Once this position is filled, our department will be fully staffed—except for our one unfunded FTE. This unfunded position is also for a compliance investigator, which

brings me to the role of this committee and the legislative body. I am confident that, if funded, we will receive another strong pool of qualified applicants when the position is posted.

I want to reiterate the current backlog our department faces. The only way to efficiently reduce this backlog is by being fully staffed, and to achieve full staffing, we require full funding. Therefore, I respectfully request the Committee's support for the statutory duties assigned to the Department by the Legislature and ask that you recommend a Do Pass for the requested \$3,495,709 budget and 13 funded FTEs. Thank you for your time and service to North Dakota. I am happy to stand for any questions.

