



THE CHAMBER
FARGO MOORHEAD WEST FARGO

Letter of Support – HB 1036

Wednesday, January 8th, 2024

Chairman Warrey and Members of the House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee,

For the record, my name is Cale Dunwoody, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber). On behalf of our over 1,700 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of House Bill 1036.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. We believe this legislation will significantly strengthen North Dakota's workforce environment by enhancing our state's ability to deliver a proven and highly effective method of developing a skilled worker. Apprenticeships combine hands-on experience with classroom instruction, providing future employees with valuable skills and credentials, leading to competitive career prospects and substantial earning potential. Research from the U.S. Department of Labor demonstrates that apprenticeships impact retention of new employees with 92% retained to full employment after their experience.

Additionally, Reed et al. (2012) found that the impact of apprenticeships is long lasting, with participants earning about \$6,500 more a year than non-participants with similar backgrounds; that equates to more than \$98,700 over a worker's lifetime. Not only do these programs benefit employees – employers are shown to have a typical 44.3% return on investment in employees.

The creation of the Division of Apprenticeship will streamline the development and implementation of apprenticeship programs, administer the federal apprenticeship system within North Dakota and foster strong partnerships with businesses to expand skill development opportunities across the state. This strategic investment will build a robust apprenticeship structure and strengthen the pipeline of highly skilled workers – particularly in critical sectors such as construction, manufacturing, agriculture, and healthcare.

House Bill 1036 further invests in long-term, meaningful solutions that strategically address the state's workforce challenges and expand North Dakota's economy. We encourage this committee and the Legislative Assembly to support this bill, along with other initiatives, to help us address our state's critical workforce challenges.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your commitment to North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Cale Dunwoody
Vice President of Public Policy
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce