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January 14, 2025

Chairman Bekkedahl and Members of the Appropriations Committee,
I am writing in strong support of SB2018. Last year (2023), for the first time in recent history, North Dakota ranked number one in the nation for percentage of net movers. North Dakota. We had the highest percentage of people moving into the state minus those choosing to leave it, far surpassing states like North Carolina, Texas, and Florida.

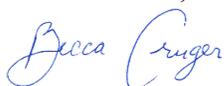
Why did we land this title and why are we, one of the smallest states by population, starting to carve a name for ourselves in attracting talent and retaining residents? I believe it is because the Governor's office and our legislators have had an eagle eye and understanding for the war on talent. Workforce is, and will continue to be, the number one determinant for whether companies choose to invest in North Dakota or site their locations elsewhere.

Our legislature and our Commerce Division have been leaders and innovators, looking for new talent pools and doubling down on efforts to retain North Dakotans who already call this place home. Landmark legislation in the last two sessions has funded talent attraction efforts, regional workforce development like RWIP funding, reimbursement for companies who add internships, and scholarships for North Dakotans.

At the regional level, I spend a lot of time visiting with CEOs and human resources managers who need to fill open positions. This is the difference between whether they choose to expand in North Dakota or take their business elsewhere. Because of the leadership and forward vision of Commerce's Division of Workforce, our office has been able to implement programs that have helped recruit new North Dakotans through talent attraction efforts, educate high schoolers about careers in the region, and create over 100 new internships.

Now is not the time to take our eye off the valuable programs administered by Commerce, specifically the Division of Workforce. While we've made significant strides in talent attraction and retention, today North Dakota has over 14,000 published job openings. I strongly encourage you to give your full support to this very warranted bill.

With Warmth,



Becca Cruger