

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Andrea Pfennig, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs for the Greater North Dakota Chamber. GNDC is North Dakota's largest statewide business advocacy organization, with membership represented by small and large businesses, local chambers, and trade and industry associations across the state. We stand in **support** of Senate Bill 2147.

Since the program's inception, GNDC has been supportive of Career Builders. SB 2147 proposes the following changes to the program.

- Enable individuals that live within 50 miles of the state to access the program while retaining the requirement to work in the state for 3 years.
- Removes the GPA requirement from state law, instead focusing on academic progress.
- Modifies the scholarship payback requirement so that students are only required to pay the state portion back to the state.

GNDC is supportive of the changes to the program. In our 2024 ND Economics and Employer Survey of our membership, 70% of respondents indicated they were having trouble hiring employees. Labor availability has been identified as the top business concern facing companies in North Dakota. We feel these changes will help expand access to the program while maintaining its purpose.