

SB2131

Chair Wobbema and members of the committee. My name is Todd Beard. I am the Senator from District 23 serving the Williston and Trenton area.

TrainND provides training and services to assist the workforce needs of companies and workers in a variety of ways. From medical, safety, CDL, crane and many more. TrainND was set up into 4 quadrants at 4 universities with NW at Williston State, NE at Lake Region in Devils Lake, SW at Bismarck State and SE at NDSCS in Wahpeton. Although the 4 TrainND regions are connected under the umbrella of CTE, each district operates independently. The funding model for each area was separated out putting the NW region at a disadvantage. The NW region had the highest revenues and provided the highest amount of workers trained with the least amount of funding. For more than 20 years the NW region raised concern for this issue, but nothing changed. Then in the 2023 session I introduced SB2122. This bill would have changed the funding model to give more weight to performance in the number of people trained, which would have been more equitable to the NW region. The bill was heard in committee with opposition requesting to turn the bill into an interim study to determine the most equitable solution. So the bill was changed to a study and was passed.

On February 22, 2024, the interim Workforce Committee was presented a solution for the study which was a good compromise putting more weight on performance. SB 2131, which is before you now is that solution. This new funding model distributes the funds

60% distributed evenly, 20% distributed by contact hours and 20% by unduplicated participants. This model is more equitable to the NW region but provides other regions with an opportunity to expand and receive a larger level of funding. It was requested at the committee meeting that no action be taken by the committee in statute to give flexibility to the TrainND Directors and University Presidents to change the formula as needed. So that is what was decided.

I have confirmed the change has been made to the funding model. My concern is it took over 20 years to create change. The funding model could be too easily changed in 2 or 3 years. I believe the best course of action is to codify the change into statute. That way any change would require legislative action.

Thank you for your consideration and ask for a DO PASS recommendation on SB2131. I stand for any questions.