



Senate Workforce

SB2239

January 30, 2025

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Committee. My name is Wayde Sick, and I serve as the State Director for the Department of Career and Technical Education. I am testifying today in support of SB2239.

Registered apprenticeship is a tried-and-true workforce development tool, requiring employer and employee involvement, hands-on training, and related technical instruction. In the 2023 Legislative Session, you all passed the flexibility to allow an apprentice, that earned the North Dakota State Scholarship, to use that scholarship to offset expenses related to being an apprentice. This may include tuition, tools, personal protective equipment, etc. The problem was many apprentices either didn't qualify for the State Scholarship or simply didn't apply as they were not planning to attend a college or university.

SB2239 focuses on what the apprentice is accomplishing instead of what they accomplished prior to high school graduation. This bill attempts to create a small grant to offset costs an apprentice may have in his or her initial years upon being registered in a program. Yes, apprentices are paid, but they are at the low end of the salary range and may have some heavy upfront expenses, upon becoming an apprentice. I believe this is a viable method for the State to support apprentices that are taking an alternate, yet very successful route, to employment.

I believe something Committee needs to keep in mind is HB1036. HB1036 would create a division of apprenticeship within the ND Department of Labor, which is also referenced in SB2239. There has been discussion concerning amending the bill, to

locate an alternate location for that office. I feel SB2239 and HB1036 should align, so if approved, this grant is also managed by the same office and State Agency.

This concludes my testimony, and I am happy to stand for any questions.