



**Testimony of Laura Lacher**  
**Economic Development Association of North Dakota**  
**In Support of SB 2306**  
**February 6, 2025**

Chair Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee:

My name is Laura Lacher, and I am the executive director of the Economic Development Association of North Dakota (EDND). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2306. This bill is critical because it directly addresses one of the biggest barriers to workforce participation – access to affordable and reliable child care.

North Dakota faces a persistent workforce shortage, and access to reliable, high-quality child care which is a key factor in workforce participation. Without available and affordable child care options, many parents are unable to enter or remain in the workforce, directly impacting businesses, economic growth and our states long-term prosperity.

Senate Bill 2306 takes a critical step in addressing the workforce shortages within the child care industry by providing targeted incentive payments to licensed early childhood service providers. These incentives will help recruit and retain child care professionals, ensuring more families have access to services they need. A strong and stable child care workforce supports working parents, allowing them to fully participate in North Dakota's economy and fill essential jobs in every sector.

Additionally, this bill ensures accountability by tying payments directly to the number of children that are being taken care of and requiring that funds be used to improve wages and benefits for child care workers. This approach recognizes the importance of attracting and retaining quality professionals in this field while maximizing the impact of state resources.

Economic development depends on a robust workforce, in turn workforce participation depends on access to child care. Senate Bill 2306 is an investment in North Dakota's future workforce and economic stability. On behalf of EDND, we urge the committee to recommend a "Do Pass" recommendation on this important legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration.