



Rough Rider Center support of **HB 1431**

February 1, 2021

Representative Delzer and committee members,

My name is Patrick Bertagnolli, the Watford City Rough Rider Center & Community Enhancement Director. I want to express my support for **HB 1431** with specific interest in regards to Workforce Development and Career & Technical Education.

By trade I am a Human Resources professional. I certainly understand the dynamics of workforce development and career pathways. As a member of the North Dakota Workforce Development Council, I have spent the past several years highly engaged with state leaders, industry professionals and students within our community to promote diversification, sustainability and alignment.

From a community standpoint, I have witnessed perseverance in reference to our collaborative nature to work together to abate workforce shortages and career development options. As an example, we have begun a nursing program in Watford City through a partnership with Williston State College, McKenzie County Healthcare Systems and the Rough Rider Center. There is demand for growth if we can find the adequate space. To address displaced workers, we have aligned with private industry to develop pilot programs to retrain and upskill these critical workers with the goal of retaining them in our community and adapting to the work that is available.

In addition, during the recent Oil and Gas downturn and COVID-19 – our community took the opportunity to strengthen our relationships with statewide innovators, hosting an event called WE Work! West meets East on Career Development. We have educated our area residents on progressive strategies that are migrating from the East side of our state to the West. I would like to recognize our neighbors in the East for their support and partnership as we work together to promote statewide innovation. They are: Golden Path Solutions, NDSU Nice Center, Microsoft, Emerging Digital Academy, Be More Colorful and OmniByte Technology.

We have certainly experienced our fair share of turbulence. We understand that we need to take a more direct approach to controlling our destiny as demonstrated by our actions in developing relationships with statewide playmakers. To accomplish our mission, there is one more piece to the puzzle. We need your support of **HB 1431**.

Thank you for your service to our communities and the great state of North Dakota!

Patrick Bertagnolli  
Rough Rider Center & Community Enhancement Director