



**Senate Appropriations Committee – SB 2289**

**Senator Ray Holmberg, Chair**

**February 10, 2021**

Chairman Holmberg, Members of the Committee:

My name is Brian Ritter and I'm President of the Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC. On behalf of our organization's approximately 1,200 members, we support SB 2289.

The single greatest challenge facing Bismarck-Mandan's economy and our members is workforce. This is illustrated by the fact that there are currently more than 2,400 open jobs across our community. Furthermore, those job openings aren't just in one industry, they're in a number of different industries including: healthcare, construction & extraction, transportation & material moving, management and more. In short, they're in 'white collar' and 'blue collar' fields alike which is where North Dakota Choice Ready enters.

The North Dakota Choice Ready framework is a tool to assist educators to ensure all students successfully depart high school possessing the essential skills necessary to be ready for life, whether they're pursuing a post-secondary education, entering the workforce or joining the military. SB 2289 and the alignment of our state's scholarships to the Choice Ready framework reinforces the benefits of Choice Ready and how both academics and life skills are what's desired for our State's students.

For these reasons, we support SB 2289 and respectfully ask for a DO PASS recommendation. Thank you for your consideration.