



WORKFORCE COMMITTEE

Monday, October 7, 2024
Roughrider Room, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Representative Shannon Roers Jones, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Representatives Shannon Roers Jones, Dick Anderson*, Josh Christy*, Hamida Dakane, Jay Fisher, Mike Motschenbacher, Scott Wagner, Jonathan Warrey; Senators Jeff Barta, Ryan Braunberger, Michael A. Wobbema

Members absent: Representative Landon Bahl; Senator Randy A. Burckhard

Others present: Matt Dunlevy, North Dakota Unmanned Autonomous Systems Council; Carolyn Laird and Nathan Svihovec, Department of Labor and Human Rights; Katie Ralston Howe, Department of Commerce; and Wayne Sick, Department of Career and Technical Education

**Attended remotely*

It was moved by Senator Barta, seconded by Representative Motschenbacher, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the June 24, 2024, meeting be approved as distributed.

REPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Ms. Katie Ralston Howe, Director, Workforce Division, Department of Commerce, presented a report ([Appendix A](#)) regarding workforce development grants awarded to a tribally controlled community college and an update on the Office of Legal Immigration. She noted:

- The department has worked with governing bodies and employers in major cities and rural communities across the state to bring awareness regarding the workforce services offered by the Office of Legal Immigration.
- The Office of Legal Immigration is building relationships with public entities across the country to bring new Americans into North Dakota's workforce.
- Workers recruited by the Office of Legal Immigration are scheduled to be employed in the state's labor market by the end of the 2023-25 biennium.
- The Office of Legal Immigration immediately will benefit the state's agriculture, construction, health care, and manufacturing industries.

OFFICE OF APPRENTICESHIP STUDY

Senator Wobbema presented a bill draft [[25.0348.01000](#)] relating to the creation of the division of apprenticeship within the Department of Labor and Human Rights. He noted providing additional capacity to North Dakota's State Director within the federal Office of Apprenticeship may grow the number of apprenticeships in the state.

Chairman Roers Jones presented a bill draft [[25.0398.01000](#)] relating to the creation of the office of apprenticeship within the Division of Workforce Development of the Department of Commerce.

Ms. Ralston Howe provided testimony ([Appendix B](#)) regarding the committee's study of the feasibility and desirability of creating a state office of apprenticeship. She noted:

- The use of apprenticeship scholarships may help increase the number of apprentices in all industries in the state.

- Because North Dakota has not created a state apprenticeship agency in conformity with federal law and regulations, the United States Department of Labor ultimately determines whether to create and approve a registered apprenticeship program in the state.
- Several state agencies are collaborating with North Dakota's State Director in the federal Office of Apprenticeship to grow the number of apprentices in the state.

Mr. Wayne Sick, Director, Department of Career and Technical Education, provided testimony regarding the committee's study of the feasibility and desirability of creating a state office of apprenticeship. He noted:

- The three major components of an apprenticeship are technical instruction, on-the-job training, and a progressive pay scale.
- The Department of Career and Technical Education is willing to collaborate with North Dakota's State Director in the federal Office of Apprenticeship to increase registered apprenticeship programs in the state.
- To grow the number of apprentices in the state, the department plans to use the career and technical education centers to strengthen pre-apprenticeship youth programs between high schools and employers offering apprenticeships.
- The department's primary focus is placing high school students into pre-apprenticeship youth programs, rather than providing additional capacity to North Dakota's State Director within the federal Office of Apprenticeship.
- The lack of capacity to administer apprenticeship programs and the supply of apprentices in the state both are issues the Legislative Assembly and state agencies should focus on resolving.

Mr. Nathan Svihovec, Commissioner, Department of Labor and Human Rights, provided testimony ([Appendix C](#)) regarding the committee's study of the feasibility and desirability of creating a state office of apprenticeship. He noted:

- The Department of Labor and Human Rights and Department of Career and Technical Education do not collaborate or perform joint duties relating to apprenticeship programs in the state.
- The existence of apprenticeship programs should not conflict with employee-sponsored training programs.
- Lake Region State College offers apprenticeship programs based on emerging technology.

Committee members expressed the desire to provide additional resources to North Dakota's State Director in the federal Office of Apprenticeship by creating full-time employee positions within the Department of Labor and Human Rights.

It was moved by Senator Wobbema, seconded by Representative Wagner, and carried on a roll call vote that the bill draft [25.0348.01000] relating to the creation of the division of apprenticeship within the Department of Labor and Human Rights, be approved and recommended to the Legislative Management. Representatives Roers Jones, Anderson, Christy, Dakane, Fisher, Motschenbacher, Wagner, and Warrey and Senators Barta, Braunberger, and Wobbema voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

REPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Svihovec and Ms. Carolyn Laird, Research Assistant, Department of Labor and Human Rights, provided a report ([Appendix D](#)) regarding the status of the Commissioner's review and meetings with each occupational board under North Dakota Century Code Title 43, the Education Standards and Practices Board, and the State Board of Law Examiners to establish a strategy to expedite licensure of out-of-state practitioners and revise continuing education requirements. They noted software vendors have the ability to create customizable licensing programs to meet the needs of occupational boards.

EXISTING AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Mr. Matt Dunlevy, President and Chief Executive Officer, North Dakota Unmanned Autonomous Systems Council, provided testimony ([Appendix E](#)) regarding the committee's study of existing autonomous systems and infrastructure. He noted:

- North Dakota's autonomous systems environment is heavily dominated by the use of uncrewed aircraft.
- The autonomous technologies industry is one of the state's primary economic stimuli and further investment will strengthen the state's position as a global leader.

Chairman Roers Jones presented a bill draft [\[25.0401.02000\]](#) to provide an appropriation to the Agriculture Commissioner, the Attorney General, Department of Career and Technical Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Transportation to increase the use of uncrewed aircraft systems, autonomous vehicles, or other autonomous technologies in the state.

Senator Barta disclosed a potential conflict of interest resulting from his employment involving UAS and UAS research and requested to be excused from voting on the bill draft [\[25.0401.02000\]](#).

It was moved by Representative Anderson, seconded by Senator Wobbema, and carried on a roll call vote that Senator Barta be allowed to vote on the bill draft [\[25.0401.02000\]](#). Representatives Roers Jones, Anderson, Christy, Dakane, Fisher, Motschenbacher, Wagner, and Warrey and Senators Braunberger and Wobbema voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

It was moved by Representative Warrey, seconded by Representative Motschenbacher, and carried on a roll call vote that the bill draft [\[25.0401.02000\]](#) relating to providing an appropriation to the Agriculture Commissioner, the Attorney General, Department of Career and Technical Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Transportation to increase the use of uncrewed aircraft systems, autonomous vehicles, or other autonomous technologies in the state, be approved and recommended to the Legislative Management. Representatives Roers Jones, Anderson, Christy, Dakane, Fisher, Motschenbacher, Wagner, and Warrey and Senators Barta, Braunberger, and Wobbema voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

It was moved by Senator Barta, seconded by Senator Wobbema, and carried on a voice vote that the Chairman and the Legislative Council staff be requested to prepare a report and the bill drafts recommended by the committee and to present the report and recommended bill drafts to the Legislative Management.

It was moved by Senator Barta, seconded by Representative Dakane, and carried on a voice vote that the committee be adjourned sine die.

No further business appearing, Chairman Roers Jones adjourned the committee sine die at 11:47 a.m.

Dustin A. Richard
Counsel

ATTACH:5