

Chair Heinert and Education committee members:

For the Record: Tommy Kenville CEO/Founder of Isight Drone Services, Grand Forks ND

Thank you for the opportunity to present this morning. Our company has hired twenty-three people in the drone/tech industry in the last 3 years, and this year, the company will most likely increase by another 5-10 people. It is critical that the North Dakota students we employ have exceptional computer and cybersecurity skills as we operate on government properties, military bases, essential energy infrastructure and for private industry -- it is imperative that our data is secure. Everyone is hit daily with cyber security issues including random texts, emails, robo calls and hackers to name a few.

How many electronic devices do each of you have today? 4-6? Phones, computers, laptops, smart TV's, and many other items that are all run by technology.

Our world today is all about technology whether we like it or not. It is more a part of our lives than some of the core education pillars like English and math. Computers are tools students utilize for completing English and math assignments.

The drone industry has hired about 2000 people in the last 5 years between public and private organizations-private tech companies like mine and Grand Sky; large defense contractors such as Northrup Grumman and General Atomics; the military – Air National Guard and the Grand Forks Air Force Base; institutions of higher education - UND, NDSCS, NDSU, Lake Region, Williston State to name a few. It would be valuable if students graduated with foundational computer science skills that may lead to careers at one of the entities listed.

Our company has sponsored or donated to many STEM activities in Watford City, Grand Forks, Fargo, Bismarck and others. The Tech industry will continue to grow at warp speed in North Dakota and it would be of benefit for K-12 students to have the technical knowledge so they would be able to apply, qualify and obtain high tech careers with excellent pay in North Dakota.

I hope cyber security and computer technology are required classes to take on some level in the K-12 system in North Dakota.

Again thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning and if you have any questions I would be happy to answer.



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