



Chairman Bekkedahl and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

I am Brekka Kramer, President | CEO of the Minot Area Chamber EDC. The Minot Area Chamber EDC's mission is to advocate for and invest in business activity by being a collaborative partner in the community, focused on improving quality of life for all. Our vision is to be the go-to organization for our business community to drive key initiatives that build and strengthen our economy. On behalf of our nearly 700 member-investors, I am here today to testify in support of House Bill 1018.

In January 2023 we adopted a new five-year strategic plan and developed five pillars of focus. Those pillars are Economic Development, Community Development, Workforce Development Measurements, Military Support, and Member Investor Services. Workforce Development is a new pillar due to the major challenges facing nearly every business across our great state.

An investment into workforce development where organizations can partner with Commerce will be critical. One example of early success is the Find the Good Life program under the Department of Commerce's Workforce Division. The first person to move to North Dakota moved to Minot last summer. We have seen good success in working with the many organizations tied to promoting our state as a great place to move to for employment and a high quality of life.

Our region also saw great success through the Department of Commerce's North Dakota Regional Workforce Impact Program, or ND-RWIP, that was approved by the State Legislature and executed last year. This effort is being used right now toward childcare expansions, Career and Technical Education expansions, healthcare training, CDL training simulators, and exposure at the high school level for more in-demand job fields.

When it comes to four of our five pillars, the Department of Commerce is a lead partner. These initiatives are supported throughout the various programs, grants, and personnel that are referenced in House Bill 1018.

We are very appreciative the hard-working staff throughout all levels of the North Dakota Department of Commerce and would urge the committee and Senate to provide the Commerce team with the resources to manage the many great initiatives that are being proposed to grow our state and attract and support additional workforce.

Thank you for your service to our state and for your dedication to using taxpayer funds to best benefit our state for decades to come. We would echo the many others, in asking for a Do Pass recommendation on the executive budget requests tied to House Bill 1018.

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