

Dear members of the House,

My name is Hannah Whalen, and I am the Recruiting Manager at the University of North Dakota (UND). On behalf of UND, I offer testimony in favor of Senate Bill 2018 and urge the committee to restore the \$5 million line item to ND Find the Good Life.

As many of you know, North Dakota faces an ongoing challenge due to our state's low unemployment rate, which makes it difficult at times to find qualified talent to fill open positions. This challenge has made out-of-state recruitment an essential strategy for many businesses and organizations, including UND. The ND Find the Good Life program has been a valuable resource in helping us address this issue, and I want to highlight its success in assisting us with our workforce needs.

Through this program, UND has already successfully hired two full-time employees who have relocated to our state, and we are currently in the process of interviewing an additional candidate through the program. These hires are critical to our continued growth and success as an institution. In addition to our experience, the ND Find the Good Life program has been instrumental in helping relocate a total of 80 employees, and 122 people overall in just 18 months to our great state—a truly remarkable achievement. These numbers speak volumes about the program's effectiveness in connecting out-of-state talent with employers here in North Dakota.

The success of this program, especially during its start-up phase, demonstrates its immense value to the state. By facilitating connections between communities, employers, and qualified individuals outside our state, the ND Find the Good Life program has proven to be a critical tool in our efforts to attract talent to North Dakota. It is not just a recruitment program; it's a workforce and community development initiative that supports our state's long-term economic growth and sustainability.

At a time when finding qualified candidates is becoming more competitive, the ability to rely on a state-supported initiative that addresses our specific workforce challenges is invaluable. If we are to continue to thrive as a state, it is crucial that we invest in programs like ND Find the Good Life.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Hannah Whalen

Recruiting Manager

University of North Dakota