

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Andrea Pfennig, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs for the Greater North Dakota Chamber. GNDC is North Dakota's largest statewide business advocacy organization, with membership represented by small and large businesses, local chambers, and trade and industry associations across the state. We stand in **support** of Senate Bill 2234.

In our 2024 ND Economics and Employer Survey of our membership, 70% of respondents indicated they were having trouble hiring employees. Labor availability has been identified as the top business concern facing companies in North Dakota.

Because of this, our members support resources for the implementation of career exploration programs. We feel that funding for Choice Ready grants will be a valuable resource that will enable schools to position students for success.

We hope that you will strengthen North Dakota's business climate by investing in workforce development strategies. Thank you for your consideration.