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S.B. 2239

SUPPORT

House Industry, Business and Labor Committee

Rep. Jonathan Warrey, Chairman
Rep. Jorin Johnson, Vice Chair
Rep. Mitch Ostlie, Vice Chair

Testimony of Zachary Greenberg

Interim Commissioner of Labor
N.D. Department of Labor and Human Rights

March 18, 2025

Chair Warrey and Members of the Committee,

Chairman Warrey and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2239. For the record, my name is Zachary Greenberg, Interim Commissioner of the North Dakota Department of Labor and Human Rights.

While I recognize the importance of apprenticeship programs in expanding workforce opportunities, I want to highlight a fundamental issue with placing this program within the Department of Labor and Human Rights. The department is a regulatory and compliance agency—not a workforce development agency.

The Department of Labor's Role

The core mission of the Department of Labor and Human Rights is to enforce state labor laws, investigate employment discrimination claims, and ensure compliance with wage and hour regulations. The department does not administer workforce training programs, nor does it engage in employer-driven economic development initiatives. Instead, our focus is on protecting workers' rights and ensuring fair labor practices.

Why Apprenticeship Programs Do Not Belong in Labor

1. Misalignment with the Department's Regulatory Function

Apprenticeship programs are proactive workforce development tools designed to support business growth and job training. The Department of Labor and Human Rights primarily enforces labor laws, investigates claims, and ensures compliance with employment regulations. Administering an apprenticeship grant program would be outside our agency's core function.

2. Lack of Workforce Development Infrastructure

The department does not currently manage workforce training initiatives, nor does it have the infrastructure to support employer-driven apprenticeship programs. Our staff and resources are dedicated to regulatory enforcement, and adding an apprenticeship grant program would divert focus from our statutory responsibilities.

Conclusion

For these reasons, I urge the committee to recommend a DO NOT PASS on SB 2239 as written. Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions.