



**Testimony**  
**Senate Industry and Business Committee**  
**House Bill 1191**  
**April 1, 2025**

Chairman Barta and members of the Senate Industry and Business Committee. The Valley Prosperity Partnership (VPP) is a membership organization led by business executives – joined by economic development, chamber of commerce, and higher education leaders – to advance and advocate for shared strategic economic development opportunities for the Red River Valley region and for North Dakota.

A robust entrepreneurial ecosystem and strong rate of business formation is essential to any healthy, growing economy, providing the primary sources of innovation and new job creation.

Many of the North Dakota's largest and most successful businesses began as small businesses. Now these businesses employ thousands and have attracted other businesses from outside the state as part of their supply and service chain. It is critical that North Dakota encourages and supports new entrepreneurial efforts by engaging legacy entrepreneurs, mentoring younger startups, and encouraging the spinout of new innovations from within existing industry and North Dakota's universities.

Therefore, The VPP supports the creation of an office of entrepreneurship within the department of commerce to 1) work to strengthen policies and programs supporting the growth of entrepreneurship in the state, 2) work with stakeholders and organizations supporting entrepreneurship, and 3) serve as a point of contact to assist businesses that have been in operation less than five years, in their interactions with state agencies and, when appropriate, refer the businesses to other state or local agencies that provide assistance to businesses.

The creation and mobilization of the office entrepreneurship can be a force multiplier for organizations throughout the state that provide support and resources to entrepreneurs and startup companies. This will have a significant impact on our state's future economy.

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