

2025 SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SB 2131

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Workforce Development Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

SB 2131
1/17/2025

Relating to workforce training center funding distribution.

9:01 a.m. Chairman Wobbema called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Wobbema, Vice-Chairman Axtman, Senator Boschee, Senator Larson, Senator Powers.

Discussion Topics:

- Funding model change
- Funding timeline
- Additional funding

9:03 a.m. Senator Beard, testified in favor and submitted testimony #29311 and #29772.

9:12 a.m. Lisa Johnson, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs with NDUS, testified in opposition and submitted testimony #29736.

9:20 a.m. Wayde Sick, Director of ND technical Education Program, testified in neutral.

Additional written testimony:

Nichole Wischnak, Director of Workforce Affairs, submitted testimony in opposition #29225

9:27 a.m. Chairman Wobbema closed the meeting.

Andrew Ficek, Committee Clerk



Division for Workforce Affairs

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SB 2131

Senate Workforce Development Committee

January 14, 2025

Nichole Wischnak, TrainND Southeast Director, Director of Workforce Affairs & Sales-NDSCS
701.231.6912 | nichole.wischnak@ndscs.edu

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee. My name is Nichole Wischnak, and I serve as the Director of Workforce Affairs & Sales at NDSCS, which serves the SE region of TrainND. I am here today on behalf of TrainND SE to provide opposing testimony related to SB 2131.

TrainND is a vital program to assist in workforce development and upskilling for North Dakota. TrainND needs flexibility and adaptability to change the funding formula regarding the ever-changing workforce demands. This bill could serve as a burden and harm the growth of TrainND, resulting in a lengthy and troublesome process that would reduce training productivity, and a reduction in revenue generated.

Since its inception, TrainND's funding formula has been reviewed internally every two years allowing TrainND the flexibility to adapt as needed with the demands of the workforce, allowing us the ability to change the formula as needed. Locking the current funding formula into century code would serve as a disadvantage and harm the growth of TrainND, making it a lengthy and troublesome process that would negatively affect revenue generated and more importantly training opportunities for TrainND.

With a process currently in place for discussion on funding formulas every two years, adding the additional step of turning this into century code is unnecessary. Additionally, if approved, staff would need to spend valuable time and resources preparing to have the century code updated instead of focusing on creating training opportunities and generating revenues. The majority of TrainND is a self-generating revenue, and locking in one version of a funding formula will limit the opportunities for additional revenue if it needs updating in the future and a deterrent of training workforce for TrainND.

On February 22, 2024, TrainND presented at the Workforce Interim Committee on the funding formula, and the discussion of submitting into century code was discussed. *It was unanimously agreed upon not submitting the funding formula into century code.* This included all Directors of the TrainND regions, and the Presidents of their respective colleges. This bill goes against what TrainND supports for updating and processing funding formulas for the future.

I request a **Do Not Pass** on the bill and will stand for questions from Committee members. This concludes my testimony related to SB2131.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nichole Wischnak".

Nichole Wischnak

Director of Workforce Affairs & Sales

SB2131

Chair Wobbema and members of the committee. My name is Todd Beard. I am the Senator from District 23 serving the Williston and Trenton area.

TrainND provides training and services to assist the workforce needs of companies and workers in a variety of ways. From medical, safety, CDL, crane and many more. TrainND was set up into 4 quadrants at 4 universities with NW at Williston State, NE at Lake Region in Devils Lake, SW at Bismarck State and SE at NDSCS in Wahpeton. Although the 4 TrainND regions are connected under the umbrella of CTE, each district operates independently. The funding model for each area was separated out putting the NW region at a disadvantage. The NW region had the highest revenues and provided the highest amount of workers trained with the least amount of funding. For more than 20 years the NW region raised concern for this issue, but nothing changed. Then in the 2023 session I introduced SB2122. This bill would have changed the funding model to give more weight to performance in the number of people trained, which would have been more equitable to the NW region. The bill was heard in committee with opposition requesting to turn the bill into an interim study to determine the most equitable solution. So the bill was changed to a study and was passed.

On February 22, 2024, the interim Workforce Committee was presented a solution for the study which was a good compromise putting more weight on performance. SB 2131, which is before you now is that solution. This new funding model distributes the funds

60% distributed evenly, 20% distributed by contact hours and 20% by unduplicated participants. This model is more equitable to the NW region but provides other regions with an opportunity to expand and receive a larger level of funding. It was requested at the committee meeting that no action be taken by the committee in statute to give flexibility to the TrainND Directors and University Presidents to change the formula as needed. So that is what was decided.

I have confirmed the change has been made to the funding model. My concern is it took over 20 years to create change. The funding model could be too easily changed in 2 or 3 years. I believe the best course of action is to codify the change into statute. That way any change would require legislative action.

Thank you for your consideration and ask for a DO PASS recommendation on SB2131. I stand for any questions.



SB 2131

Senate Workforce Development Committee

Friday, January 17, 2025

Lisa A. Johnson, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, NDUS
701-340-5054 | lisa.a.johnson@ndus.edu

Chair Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee. My name is Lisa Johnson, and I serve as the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs with the North Dakota University System (NDUS). I am testifying today in opposition SB 2131 on behalf of the NDUS and the four presidents of the campuses responsible for TrainND—Williston State College, Lake Region State College, Bismarck State College, and North Dakota State College of Science.

I testify from the vantage point as an NDUS administrator who has observed the four TrainND quadrants for well over a decade. The four TrainND directors and respective presidents understand the importance of working together to produce cohesive marketing materials, a two-year business plan, an annual performance report that is approved by the State Board of Higher Education, and rotate leadership among the TrainND directors.

The NDUS and the presidents of the TrainND quadrants are not expressing opposition to the agreed upon distribution of funds among the four TrainND quadrants. Rather, the NDUS and the campus presidents of the TrainND quadrants respectfully ask this Committee to consider the recommendation of the Interim Workforce Committee on February 22, 2024, to refrain from codifying the funding formula in century code and to permit TrainND the flexibility to adapt to changing workforce needs.

For this reason, the NDUS and the presidents of the TrainND quadrants seek a vote of “do not pass” on SB 2131.



How the Formula Would Work:

Part 1 - Equal Distribution

$$(\$1,000,000 \times 60\%) / 4 = \$150,000$$

Part 2 – Distribute Based on Performance Metric: Training Hours

$$(\$1,000,000 \times 20\%) \times [(178,643) / (556,143)] = \$64,244$$

Part 3 – Distribute Based on Performance Metric: Unduplicated Participants

$$(\$1,000,000 \times 20\%) \times [(22,264) / (38,521)] = \$115,594$$

FY2025 Distribution for TrainND NW = \$329,837

# of Training Hours						
Source: NDUS TrainND Reports - FY21 - FY23						
Region	Total	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
NW	178,643	29,969	70,523	78,151	Reporting Due September 2024	Reporting Due September 2025
NE	40,025	11,488	11,474	17,063		
SE	124,486	8,394	41,933	74,159		
SW	212,989	56,138	82,448	74,403		
Total	556,143	105,989	206,378	243,776		

# of Employees Receiving Training (Unduplicated)						
Source: NDUS TrainND Reports FY21 - FY23						
Region	Total	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
NW	22,264	4,452	8,527	9,285	Reporting Due September 2024	Reporting Due September 2025
NE	4,921	878	1,753	2,290		
SE	3,049	600	1,121	1,328		
SW	8,287	2,115	3,067	3,105		
Total	38,521	8,045	14,468	16,008		

[It's a competitive world. Train for it.]

trainND
NORTHEAST

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Workforce Development Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

SB 2131
2/14/2025

Relating to workforce training center funding distribution.

10:57 a.m. Chairman Wobbema called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Wobbema, Vice-Chairman Axtman, Senator Boschee, Senator Larson, Senator Powers.

Discussion Topics:

- Regional training sites

11:02 a.m. Wayde Sick, State Director for the Department of Career and Technical Education, answered committee questions.

11:04 a.m. Senator Boschee moved Do Not Pass.

11:05 a.m. Senator Larson seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Mike Wobbema	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	AB
Senator Josh Boschee	Y
Senator Diane Larson	Y
Senator Michelle Powers	AB

Motion passed 3-0-2.

Chairman Wobbema will carry the bill.

11:07 a.m. Chairman Wobbema adjourned the meeting.

Andrew Ficek, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
SB 2131 ([25.0989.01000](#))

Workforce Development Committee (Sen. Wobbema, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (3 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). SB 2131 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.