

2025 SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SB 2239

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Workforce Development Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

SB 2239
1/30/2025

Relating to an apprenticeship grant program; and to provide an appropriation.

9:00 a.m. Chairman Wobbema called the meeting to order.

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

Discussion Topics:

- GPA requirements
- Startup costs
- Relationships with employers
- HB 1036
- Annual apprenticeship count and duration
- Workforce retention rates

9:01 a.m. Senator Boschee introduced the bill and submitted testimony #32730.

9:08 a.m. Zachary Greenberg, Interim Commissioner of the North Dakota Department of Labor and Human Rights, testified in favor and submitted testimony #32809.

9:12 a.m. Phil Davis, Workforce Services Director at Job Service North Dakota, testified in favor and submitted testimony #32709.

9:16 a.m. Katie Ralston Howe, Workforce Development Director for the ND Department of Commerce, testified in favor and submitted testimony #23895.

9:23 a.m. Wayde Sick, Director of North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education, testified in favor and submitted testimony #32628.

9:25 a.m. Laura Mehrer, Government Affairs Specialist for Greater ND Chamber, testified in favor and submitted testimony #32728.

9:26 a.m. Don Larson, North Dakota State Director for National Federation of Independent Business, testified in favor and submitted testimony #31405.

9:27 a.m. Jason Ehlert, President of ND State Building and Construction Trades Council, testified in favor and submitted testimony #32563.

9:31 a.m. Chairman Wobbema closed the hearing.

Additional written testimony:

Cale Dunwoody, Vice President of Public Policy for Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce, submitted testimony in favor #32664.

Eric Volk, Executive Director of North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association, submitted testimony in favor #32803.

Joshua L Hansen, Director of Governmental Affairs for ND Student Association, submitted testimony in favor #32827.

Andrew Ficek, Committee Clerk



Senate Workforce Development Committee

01/30/25

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill No. 2239

Presented by Don Larson on behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB)

Chairperson Wobbema, members of the committee,

My name is Don Larson, and I am here today in my capacity as the State Director for the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB). NFIB strongly supports Senate Bill No. 2239, which aims to establish an apprenticeship grant program in North Dakota.

Support for Workforce Development: The NFIB represents more than two-thousand small and independent businesses across North Dakota. One of the most significant challenges our members face is finding skilled workers to fill critical positions. Senate Bill No. 2239 addresses this issue by providing financial support to individuals enrolled in registered apprenticeship programs. This initiative will help bridge the skills gap and ensure that our businesses have access to a well-trained workforce.

Economic Benefits: Investing in apprenticeship programs not only benefits the individuals who receive the training but also has a positive impact on the broader economy. By supporting apprenticeships, we are fostering a pipeline of skilled workers who can contribute to the growth and success of small businesses. This,

in turn, leads to job creation, increased productivity, and a more robust economy for North Dakota.

Financial Support: The appropriation of \$1,100,000 for the biennium to administer the apprenticeship grant program is a prudent investment in our state's future. By providing up to \$1,000 per year to eligible individuals, this program will make apprenticeship opportunities more accessible and affordable, encouraging more individuals to pursue these valuable training pathways.

In conclusion, the NFIB strongly supports Senate Bill No. 2239. We believe that this bill will play a role in addressing the workforce challenges faced by small businesses in North Dakota. We urge the committee to pass this bill and help ensure a prosperous future for our state's economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



NORTH DAKOTA STATE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL

2901 Twin City Dr. Suite 201
Mandan, North Dakota 58554
(701) 663-8821

® SCRU 260-C

January 29, 2025

To the Honorable Michael Wobbema and Member Senators of the Workforce Development Committee

RE: Senate Bill 2239; Supportive testimony for the apprenticeship grant program

Representing workers in the commercial, industrial, and residential construction industries from foundation to finish, we are committed to promoting, recruiting, and developing careers for all workers in the skilled trades in North Dakota. Construction is a rewarding career, and we are fully committed to passing this industry along to younger generations. Utilizing an apprenticeship program is the primary means to achieve this goal, and as such, we are in support of SB 2239.

A Registered Apprenticeship Program is a post-secondary educational model that combines hands-on training with classroom instruction. All registered programs in North Dakota are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training. This entity ensures the content of any registered program in the state is equitable to any other program across the country for the apprentice.

Registered Apprenticeship Programs provide apprentices with a low-cost education while being employed in a tiered system of increasing wages based off percentages. However, since apprentices are starting out in their careers, items such as school supplies, tools of the trade, educational materials, and others are required for purchase. Utilizing a grant program to offset their educational investment will promote additional recruiting and retaining efforts for apprentices in the construction industry for the state.

Therefore, the North Dakota State Building and Construction Trades Council is in support of SB 2239 and urges for a Do Pass recommendation to the Committee.

With kindest regards, I am

Jason Ehlert
North Dakota State Building and Construction Trades Council
President
Lobbyist No. 347
Jason@ndbtu.org



Senate Workforce

SB2239

January 30, 2025

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Committee. My name is Wayde Sick, and I serve as the State Director for the Department of Career and Technical Education. I am testifying today in support of SB2239.

Registered apprenticeship is a tried-and-true workforce development tool, requiring employer and employee involvement, hands-on training, and related technical instruction. In the 2023 Legislative Session, you all passed the flexibility to allow an apprentice, that earned the North Dakota State Scholarship, to use that scholarship to offset expenses related to being an apprentice. This may include tuition, tools, personal protective equipment, etc. The problem was many apprentices either didn't qualify for the State Scholarship or simply didn't apply as they were not planning to attend a college or university.

SB2239 focuses on what the apprentice is accomplishing instead of what they accomplished prior to high school graduation. This bill attempts to create a small grant to offset costs an apprentice may have in his or her initial years upon being registered in a program. Yes, apprentices are paid, but they are at the low end of the salary range and may have some heavy upfront expenses, upon becoming an apprentice. I believe this is a viable method for the State to support apprentices that are taking an alternate, yet very successful route, to employment.

I believe something Committee needs to keep in mind is HB1036. HB1036 would create a division of apprenticeship within the ND Department of Labor, which is also referenced in SB2239. There has been discussion concerning amending the bill, to

locate an alternate location for that office. I feel SB2239 and HB1036 should align, so if approved, this grant is also managed by the same office and State Agency.

This concludes my testimony, and I am happy to stand for any questions.



Letter of Support – SB 2239

Thursday, January 30, 2025

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

For the record, my name is Cale Dunwoody, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber). On behalf of our over 1,700 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of the Senate Bill 2239.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. Our members continue to express concerns centered around the availability of high-quality, skilled workers and a strong workforce pipeline. While the shortage gap across the United States is narrowing, North Dakota remains one of the most severe states when it comes to workforce challenges. The U.S. Chamber estimates that there are approximately only 30 available workers for every 100 open jobs in North Dakota, compared to the national comparison of 83 available workers for every 100 open jobs. This indicates more must be done to attract, retain, develop and match employees with in-demand jobs.

Apprenticeships continue to be an innovative option to fulfill our critical workforce needs while simultaneously training and educating new employees. In recent years, North Dakota has seen an increase in apprenticeships with a 28.4% increase from 2021 to 2024. High participation in apprenticeship programs creates a positive economic impact as earning occurs alongside learning – creating a pipeline of already skilled workers. Additionally, it is an effective workforce retention strategy, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, 92% of apprentices continue employment after completing a Registered Apprenticeship, earning an average starting salary of \$72,000. Those who complete apprenticeship programs receive higher wages over their lifetime, earning approximately \$6,595 more annually than non-apprentice employees in the same field and with similar backgrounds. Employers also gain from these programs, seeing a typical return on investment of 44.3%.

Offering grants to eligible individuals participating in apprenticeships bolsters our ability to develop a talented workforce pipeline – ultimately, addressing critical workforce shortages throughout the state and building a more robust economy. As this committee considers this bill, we respectfully urge this committee to give this bill a **DO PASS** recommendation to further enhance apprenticeship opportunities and workforce development throughout our state.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your commitment to North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Cale Dunwoody
Vice President of Public Policy
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce

SENATE WORKFORCE COMMITTEE
SB2239
JANUARY 30, 2025

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Committee, my name is Phil Davis, and I am the Workforce Services Director at Job Service North Dakota. I am providing this testimony in support of SB2239.

Job Service North Dakota is a member of the Workforce Development Council (WDC). The WDC is responsible for making recommendations to the Governor to address workforce within North Dakota. This year, the WDC made nine recommendations, and the content within SB2239 contains language that is directly aligned to one of these recommendations.

Job Service North Dakota has strong working relationships with employers, training providers, and our industry partners in every region of the state. We understand the workforce challenges within the state, and we support the need for growth of the apprenticeship program not only for our business community, but also for the opportunities it presents to job seekers and our training participants who are seeking to advance their own education and develop the skills that an apprenticeship program provides. This bill will support current and future apprentices in their training and support needs.

In closing, Job Service North Dakota supports this bill if it is aligned with the results of HB1036.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



GREATER NORTH DAKOTA CHAMBER
SB 2239
Senate Workforce Development
Chair Mike Wobbema
January 30, 2025

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Laura Mehrer, and I am the Government Affairs Specialist 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 2239.

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, we support resources for the implementation of career exploration programs, such as apprenticeships, internships, and work-based learning to cultivate workforce attraction and retention.

SB 2239 would establish an apprenticeship grant program that would increase access for a variety of individuals. The funding would assist individuals with initial start-up costs that can be high and may be a barrier.

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





North Dakota Senate

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Senator Josh Boschee

District 44
736 Elm Street North, Apt. 8
Fargo, ND 58102-3859
jboschee@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:

Education
Workforce Development

SB 2239 Testimony Senate Workforce Development Committee January 30, 2025

Chair Wobbema and fellow Members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

I bring to you SB 2239, which would create a grant program to support apprenticeships throughout the state. During the 2023 legislative session, the Assembly supported the expansion of the North Dakota Scholarship to cover expenses related to North Dakota students enrolling in approved apprenticeships in North Dakota. This was to support students who followed their choice ready plan to enter the workforce through a registered apprenticeship rather than post-secondary education. It also supported the goal of the Workforce Development Council to grow apprenticeship opportunities to train qualified workers for North Dakota businesses.

As the newly enacted statute was implemented, it was realized that many of the students who wished to access the North Dakota Scholarship for their registered apprenticeship did not qualify for the Scholarship based on the GPA requirements. In an effort to continue to support the growth in registered apprenticeship opportunities and assist individuals with the ability to afford the startup costs associated with many apprenticeships, the creation of this grant program is before you.

Some of our state's experts on registered apprenticeships will follow me to speak about the opportunities this grant program will provide. I hope you'll provide SB 2239 your support and I'm happy to stand for any questions or comments you may have.



Eric Volk, Executive Director

ND Rural Water Systems Association

In Support of Senate Bill 2239

Senate Workforce Development Committee

January 30, 2025

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee, my name is Eric Volk. I am the executive director of the North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association (NDRWSA). Our vision is to ensure all of North Dakota has access to affordable, ample, and quality water. NDRWSA is committed to completing and maintaining North Dakota's water infrastructure for economic growth and quality of life. We work with all the state's small/rural water and wastewater systems to help them increase their technical, managerial, and financial capacity. Today, I am submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill 2239, which seeks to create an apprenticeship grant program and to provide an appropriation of \$1,100,000.

The Need for Water and Wastewater Apprentices

Nationwide, it takes more than 380,000 highly skilled water and wastewater professionals to ensure the public supply of safe drinking water and to protect our lakes, streams, and groundwater. If there are water and wastewater services in your community, state laws require that there must be certified operators in direct responsible charge of those facilities. This means that even in the most rural of communities, job opportunities exist in the water and wastewater industry.

Over the next decade, the water sector is expected to lose 30 – 50 percent of its workforce to retirement. Many of these water professionals have worked at the same utility for the majority of their careers and they will depart with decades of valuable institutional knowledge. Furthermore, advancements in water treatment and supply technology have increased the skills and training required of this workforce. Our industry must address the need to train the next generation of skilled workers to protect and provide what is arguably the most valuable resource that is essential to all life—clean water.

About the NDRWSA Apprenticeship Program

The NDRWSA Apprenticeship Program, recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor, provides guideline standards for apprenticeship. Apprentices will attend an approximate 2-year training program comprising classroom technical instruction and on-the-job training, providing apprentices with the tools to become successful operations specialists in their communities. During the apprenticeship program, apprentices will earn while they learn from knowledgeable, passionate people who strive to deliver clean drinking water to their community and treat wastewater before returning to the environment. Students start the program with a job and emerge with a solid and secure career as a Water Operations Specialist or Wastewater Operations Specialist. Currently, our program has seven enrolled apprentices.

Cost to the Apprentice/System

The two-year NDRWSA Apprenticeship Program costs approximately \$4,000. The system and/or the apprentice pay for that cost. Funding provided by this bill would cover up to 50% of the program's cost. The system and/or individual would still have a financial stake in the process. The proposed state grant is a minimal investment to address our industry's workforce issues and to help provide safe, clean water to our residents.

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on behalf of the NDRWSA members. If you have any questions, contact me at ericvolk@ndrw.org.

69th Legislative Assembly
Regular Session (2025)

S.B. 2239

SUPPORT

Senate Workforce Development Committee

Sen. Mike Wobbema, Chairman
Sen. Michelle Axtman, Vice Chair

Testimony of Zachary Greenberg

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

January 30, 2025

Chair Wobbema and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 2239. I am Zachary Greenberg, interim Commissioner of the North Dakota Department of Labor and Human Rights. I appreciate the committee's work in advancing policies that strengthen workforce development in North Dakota.

Before we dive in, I think it's important to note that HB 1036 creates a division of apprenticeship and SB 2239 establishes an apprenticeship grant program under the Department of Labor and Human Rights. I haven't yet had the opportunity to testify on HB 1036, but when I do, I will be testifying in support of the bill but also its relocation to Job Service North Dakota. In short, I recommend that the Apprenticeship Office be housed within Job Service North Dakota due to its strong alignment with workforce development initiatives, employer engagement, and federal apprenticeship support.

Importance of Alignment Between Scholarship and Apprenticeship Office

If the legislature moves forward with both SB 2239 and HB 1036, it is crucial to ensure alignment between the location of the scholarship program and the Apprenticeship Office.

If the state moves forward with this structure, it would be logical and beneficial for the apprenticeship grant program established in SB 2239 to be administered in coordination with the Apprenticeship Office.

Why This Alignment Matters

1. Consistency in Program Administration: Placing the grant program within the same agency overseeing apprenticeship development will create a seamless process for apprentices, employers, and administrators.
2. Maximizing Employer Engagement: Job Service North Dakota has well-established relationships with employers, allowing for better coordination in both program funding and employer participation.
3. Efficiency in Resource Allocation: Combining the administration of apprenticeship-related initiatives in one agency ensures effective use of state resources, reducing redundancy and improving outcomes for workers.

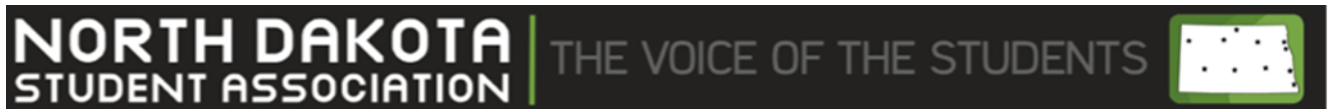
4. Enhanced Accessibility for Apprentices: Having a single point of contact for apprenticeship programs and financial assistance simplifies the process for individuals seeking to enter these career pathways.

To achieve these benefits, I recommend that the committee consider ensuring that SB 2239 and HB 1036 remain aligned in both intent and execution. This alignment will allow North Dakota to fully realize the potential of these apprenticeship initiatives and deliver the best possible support to our workforce.

Conclusion

Chairman Wobbema and members of the committee, SB 2239 is a critical step in strengthening our apprenticeship pipeline, and I urge its passage with consideration of the broader alignment of our apprenticeship infrastructure.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions.

**SB 2239**

January 30, 2025

Joshua L Hansen, North Dakota Student Association

(701) 318-6227 | joshua.hansen@ndus.edu

Chair Wobbema and Members of the Committee: My name is Joshua L Hansen, and I am Director of Governmental Affairs for the NDSA. I am here today in support of SB 2239.

The North Dakota Student Association is dedicated to ensuring that students have a voice at the table in policy that affects higher education. We consist of delegates from each of the 11 public North Dakota University System (NDUS) institutions, meeting monthly to engage students in discussions about North Dakota higher education policy. Since 1969, our mission has been to empower students, create collaboration between the student bodies of the North Dakota public universities, and to provide a student perspective on higher education policy.

During our current year, the NDSA passed its legislative priorities for the biennium (see [NDSA-01-2425](#)), including a legislative priority to support *“Incentivizing students to attend NDUS institutions by increasing the affordability of the NDUS through supporting scholarships and grants comparable to others in the region and to workforce needs”*. We see SB 2239 with its focus on incentivizing and rewarding excellent students in trade areas that are identified as needed by the state of North Dakota as in line with our wishes detailed in this resolution.

A strong workforce in all areas is needed to make a cohesive economy that functions at every level from trades professions that this bill focuses on, all the way up to research level jobs. Our students include those at our 2-year institutions who have quality trades programs that could use this help. As a graduate from a 2-year school that moved onto 4-year programs, I spent time as President of that college’s student body listening to the concerns of a side of the building that felt isolated and forgotten. I cannot say that it is the same here, but there needs to be a focus on the

great and necessary work that these students do. This \$1.2M would go a long way to telling the students in our trade program that they are valued, that we at the government are keeping our eyes on them, our support with them.

Something that I have learned through my life is that even a little bit of support can help someone find their own feet. By giving the incentive to excellence and pride in their programs, this grant will ease the economic rigors that come along with studying. Trades programs end up having tools and equipment costs beyond the textbooks and manuals that they require to finish their school. The \$1,000 ceiling on this bill in grant money would help alleviate these problems and allow our students an easier course to join our workforce.

Considering this information and in support of our students across the state, on behalf of the North Dakota Student Association, I urge this committee to give this bill a **DO PASS** recommendation.



Supportive Testimony

SB 2239**Senate Workforce Committee**

January 30, 2025

TESTIMONY OF

Katie Ralston Howe, Director, Workforce Development Division

Chairman Wobbema and members of the committee, I'm Katie Ralston Howe, Workforce Development Director for the ND Department of Commerce. In my role, I also serve as the executive director of the industry-led Workforce Development Council (WDC), which drives the development of the state's workforce strategy. The WDC's mission is to advise the Governor and public concerning the nature and extent of workforce needs in the state and to provide recommendations for addressing those needs while maximizing resources and avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort. I'm here in support of SB 2239.

The WDC has been a supporter of apprenticeship for many years and currently has a multi-faceted recommendation designed to increase apprenticeship participation in the state. Included within this recommendation is a scholarship (or grant) that is directly aligned with what SB 2239 seeks to create.

Many apprenticeships require upfront costs for tools and supplies, which can be a financial burden that prevents qualified candidates from participating in a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). Providing a financial resource to remove a barrier to entry for apprentices will support increased participation in this successful workforce training and retention model, especially with the dedicated efforts to support apprenticeship programs being proposed in HB 1036. Additionally, this resource may incentivize students to enter directly into RAPs, thereby increasing the number of young adults that fill jobs in high-demand occupations.

In the spirit of reducing unnecessary duplication of effort and streamlining services, I support Commissioner Greenberg's recommendation to house the apprenticeship grant in Job Service North Dakota (JSND). Job Service is already working with jobseekers who are interested in training for new career paths, in addition to working with employers to fill their vacancies. They have the best handle on the needs of employers across the state and are the best equipped to connect potential apprentices with new and existing RAPs. Housing this resource within JSND will also give the agency an important tool to support individuals who are not eligible for federal WIOA programs, but still need financial assistance to pursue an apprenticeship.

Thank you.

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Workforce Development Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

SB 2239
2/6/2025

Relating to an apprenticeship grant program; and to provide an appropriation.

10:39 a.m. Chairman Wobbema called the meeting to order.

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

Discussion Topics:

- Establishment of guidelines
- Apprenticeship completion requirement

10:40 a.m. Senator Boschee updated committee on proposed amendment.

10:47 a.m. Senator Axtman moved Amendment LC#25.0612.02001.

10:47 a.m. Senator Boschee seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed 5-0-0.

10:48 a.m. Senator Axtman motioned Do Pass as Amended and Rereferred to Appropriations.

10:49 a.m. Senator Boschee seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed 5-0-0.

Senator Boschee will carry the bill.

Senate Workforce Development Committee

SB 2239

02/06/2025

Page 2

10:50 a.m. Chairman Wobbema closed the hearing.

Andrew Ficek, Committee Clerk

February 6, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

SENATE BILL NO. 2239

Introduced by

Senators Boschee, Axtman, Wobbema

Representatives O'Brien, Schauer, Schreiber-Beck

- 1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 34-05 of the North Dakota
2 Century Code, relating to an apprenticeship grant program; and to provide an appropriation.

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

- 4 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 34-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is created
5 and enacted as follows:

6 **Apprenticeship grant program.**

- 7 1. The labor commissioner shall administer an apprenticeship grant program to provide
8 grants to eligible individuals enrolled in qualifying registered apprenticeship programs
9 within this state.
10 2. The labor commissioner, in collaboration with the United States department of labor
11 and the state board for career and technical education shall:
12 a. Establish eligibility guidelines for the program, including requiring full-time
13 enrollment, program progress, and a minimum grade point average or its
14 equivalent; and
15 b. Award an eligible individual up to one thousand three thousand dollars per year
16 within a three-year period while enrolled in an eligible program.

- 17 **SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND HUMAN RIGHTS -**
18 **APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM.** There is appropriated out of any moneys in the
19 general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$1,100,000, or so
20 much of the sum as may be necessary, to the department of labor and human rights for the

- 1 purpose of administering an apprenticeship grant program, for the biennium beginning July 1,
- 2 2025, and ending June 30, 2027.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
SB 2239**

Workforce Development Committee (Sen. Wobbema, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.0612.02001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** and **BE REREFERRED** to the **Appropriations Committee** (5 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2239 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar. This bill affects workforce development.

2025 SENATE APPROPRIATIONS

SB 2239

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations - Human Resources Division Harvest Room, State Capitol

SB 2239
2/17/2025

A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 34-05 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to an apprenticeship grant program; and to provide an appropriation.

8:34 a.m. Chairman Dever opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Dever, Senators Cleary, Magrum and Mathern
Members Absent: Senator Davison

Discussion Topics:

- New Apprenticeship Grant Program
- GPA Requirements
- Program Guidelines

8:34 a.m. Senator Boschee, District 44, introduced the bill, testified in favor and submitted testimony #37840.

8:50 a.m. Wayde Sick, Director, ND Department of Career and Technical Education, testified in favor.

9:04 a.m. Chairman Dever closed the hearing.



North Dakota Senate

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Senator Josh Boschee

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Fargo, ND 58102-3859
jboschee@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:

Education
Workforce Development

SB 2239 Testimony Senate Appropriations Committee - HR Division February 16, 2025

Chair Dever and Members of the Human Resources Division,

SB 2239, which would create a grant program to support apprenticeships throughout the state, was supported unanimously by the Workforce Development Committee.

During the 2023 legislative session, the Assembly supported the expansion of the North Dakota Scholarship to cover expenses related to North Dakota students enrolling in approved apprenticeships in North Dakota. This was to support students who followed their Choice Ready plan to enter the workforce through a registered apprenticeship. It also supported the goal of the Workforce Development Council to grow apprenticeship opportunities to train qualified workers for North Dakota businesses, which continues to be a priority of the WDC.

As the newly enacted statute was implemented, it was realized that many of the students who wished to access the North Dakota Scholarship for their registered apprenticeship did not qualify for the Scholarship based on the GPA requirements. In an effort to continue to support the Workforce Development Council's goal to grow registered apprenticeship opportunities and assist individuals with the ability to afford the startup costs associated with many apprenticeships, the creation of this grant program is before you.

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations - Human Resources Division Harvest Room, State Capitol

SB 2239
02/18/25

Relating to the apprenticeship grant program; and to provide an appropriation.
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8:31 a.m. Chairman Dever opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Dever, Senators Cleary, Davison, Magrum, and Mathern

Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action

8:31 a.m. Senator Cleary moved Do Pass.

8:31 a.m. Senator Mathern seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Dick Dever	Y
Senator Sean Cleary	Y
Senator Kyle Davison	Y
Senator Jeffery J. Magrum	Y
Senator Tim Mathern	Y

Motion Passed 5-0-0.

Senator Cleary will carry the bill.

8:33 a.m. Chairman Dever closed the hearing.

Joan Bares, Committee Clerk

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee Harvest Room, State Capitol

SB 2239
2/19/2025

A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 34-05 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to an apprenticeship grant program; and to provide an appropriation.

9:10 a.m. Chairman Bekkedahl opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Bekkedahl, Vice-Chairman Erbele, and Senators Burckhard, Cleary, Conley, Davison, Dever, Dwyer, Magrum, Mathern, Meyer, Schaible, Sickler, Sorvaag, Thomas, Wanzek.

Discussion Topics:

- Benefits of Apprenticeship Program
- Collaboration with US Dept. of Labor

9:11 a.m. Senator Mathern moved a Do Pass.

9:12 a.m. Senator Dever seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Brad Bekkedahl	Y
Senator Robert Erbele	Y
Senator Randy A. Burckhard	Y
Senator Sean Cleary	Y
Senator Cole Conley	Y
Senator Kyle Davison	Y
Senator Dick Dever	Y
Senator Michael Dwyer	Y
Senator Jeffery J. Magrum	Y
Senator Tim Mathern	Y
Senator Scott Meyer	Y
Senator Donald Schaible	Y
Senator Jonathan Sickler	Y
Senator Ronald Sorvaag	Y
Senator Paul J. Thomas	Y
Senator Terry M. Wanzek	Y

Motion Passed 16-0-0.

Senator Boschee will carry the bill.

9:16 a.m. Chairman Bekkedahl closed the hearing.

Senate Appropriations Committee

SB 2239

02/19/2025

Page 2

Elizabeth Reiten, Committee Clerk

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
ENGROSSED SB 2239 ([25.0612.03000](#))**

Appropriations Committee (Sen. Bekkedahl, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (16 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). SB 2239 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar. This bill affects workforce development.

2025 HOUSE INDUSTRY, BUSINESS AND LABOR

SB 2239

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Industry, Business and Labor Committee Room JW327C, State Capitol

SB 2239
3/18/2025

A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 34-05 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to an apprenticeship grant program; and to provide an appropriation.

9:35 a. m. Chairman Warrey opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman Warrey, Vice Chairman Ostlie, Vice Chairman Johnson, Representatives Bahl, T. Brown, Finley-DeVille, Grindberg, Kasper, Koppelman, D. Ruby, Schatz, Schauer, Vollmer

Member Absent: Representatives C. Brown

Discussion Topics:

- Grow the program
- Hosting the program
- Proactive workforce development
- Investing in strategies

9:35 a.m. Senator Josh Boschee, District 44, Fargo, ND, introduced, testified and submitted testimony #42782.

9:45 a.m. Laura Mehrer, Government Affairs Specialist, Greater North Dakota Chamber (GNDC), testified in favor and submitted testimony #42750.

9:47 a.m. Zachary N. Greenberg, Interim Commissioner, ND Department of Labor and Human Rights, testified in opposition and submitted testimony #42538.

Additional written testimony:

Bryce Johnson, Building Industry Association of the Red River Valley, submitted testimony in favor #42417.

Brittney Roehrich, CEO, North Dakota Association of Builders, submitted testimony in favor #42590.

Erick Volk, Executive Director, ND Rural Water, submitted testimony in favor #42760.

Cale Dunwoody, Vice President of Public Policy, Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF), #42776.

9:55 a.m. Chairman Warrey closed the meeting.

Diane Lillis, Committee Clerk



BUILDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
RED RIVER VALLEY

1802 32nd Ave S
Fargo ND 58103
701.232.5846
buildrrv.org

Formerly
Home Builders Association
of Fargo-Moorhead

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Adam Olson

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Bryce Johnson

2025 NDAB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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NATIONAL DELEGATES

Brock Goossens
Adam Olson
Shannon Roers Jones
Bill Rothman

Affiliated With



March 17, 2025

House Industry, Business and Labor Committee

North Dakota House of Representatives

Chairman Warrey and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Building Industry Association of the Red River Valley (formerly Home Builders Association of Fargo-Moorhead) and our over 700 members, we would like to express our support of Senate Bill 2239.

Our members, which include those in the residential and commercial building industries, are consistently seeking skilled workers. As experienced trades people retire, it is critical to prepare the next generation with necessary skills. Apprenticeships provide an excellent pathway for young individuals to gain hands-on experience while learning a trade.

The grant program proposed in SB 2239 would help make apprenticeship programs more accessible by assisting participants with the cost of their education, not only attracting more individuals to apprenticeships but also supporting retention, ensuring a steady stream of talent.

North Dakota is facing both a workforce and housing crisis. Trades such as plumbing, HVAC and electrical work, are essential to maintaining and expanding the infrastructure needed to support our growing communities. Investing in apprenticeship programs is a strategic move for building a stronger workforce and addressing these challenges.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We respectfully encourage a Do Pass recommendation.

Sincerely,

Bryce Johnson
Chief Executive Officer

Adam Olson, Allstar Construction
President

69th Legislative Assembly
Regular Session (2025)

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.

North Dakota Association of Builders

The North Dakota Association of Builders represents the professional building industry through legislation, information and education.



March 18, 2025

Testimony in Support of SB 2239

Industry, Business and Labor Committee

Chairman Jonathan Warrey

Chairman Warrey and Members of the House Industry, Business and Labor Committee,

My name is Brittney Roehrich and I'm the Chief Executive Officer for the North Dakota Association of Builders (NDAB). The NDAB represents the professional building industry through legislation, information and education with 1,400 members statewide. We are also chartered with the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

On behalf of NDAB, I submit this testimony in **support** of Senate Bill 2239. The bill will provide financial grants to eligible individuals enrolled in registered apprenticeship programs within the state.

We are currently in a workforce and housing crisis where our members are in need of skilled workers in the residential and commercial building industry. It is vital to encourage our next generation to explore a career in the construction trades as experienced tradespeople are retiring every day.

Investment in this grant program would help young individuals with their education costs while also presenting participants with hands-on experience in a construction-related trade.

In conclusion, the North Dakota Association of Builders urges the committee to **support** Senate Bill 2239 to assist with our workforce shortage. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to working together to build a stronger, more resilient housing market for our state.

Respectfully submitted,

Brittney Roehrich, *Chief Executive Officer*

North Dakota Association of Builders

brittney@ndbuild.com



GREATER NORTH DAKOTA CHAMBER
SB 2239
House Industry, Business, and Labor
Chair Jonathan Warrey
March 18, 2025

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Laura Mehrer, and I am the Government Affairs Specialist 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 2239.

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, we support resources for the implementation of career exploration programs, such as apprenticeships, internships, and work-based learning to cultivate workforce attraction and retention.

SB 2239 would establish an apprenticeship grant program that would increase access for a variety of individuals. The funding would assist individuals with initial start-up costs that can be high and may be a barrier.

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





Eric Volk, Executive Director

ND Rural Water Systems Association

In Support of Senate Bill 2239

House Industry, Business and Labor Committee

March 18, 2025

Chairman Warrey and members of the House Industry, Business and Labor Committee, my name is Eric Volk. I am the executive director of the North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association (NDRWSA). Our vision is to ensure all of North Dakota has access to affordable, ample, and quality water. NDRWSA is committed to completing and maintaining North Dakota's water infrastructure for economic growth and quality of life. We work with all the state's small/rural water and wastewater systems to help them increase their technical, managerial, and financial capacity. Today, I am submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill 2239, which seeks to create an apprenticeship grant program and to provide an appropriation of \$1,100,000.

The Need for Water and Wastewater Apprentices

Nationwide, it takes more than 380,000 highly skilled water and wastewater professionals to ensure the public supply of safe drinking water and to protect our lakes, streams, and groundwater. If there are water and wastewater services in your community, state laws require that there must be certified operators in direct responsible charge of those facilities. This means that even in the most rural of communities, job opportunities exist in the water and wastewater industry.

Over the next decade, the water sector is expected to lose 30 – 50 percent of its workforce to retirement. Many of these water professionals have worked at the same utility for the majority of their careers and they will depart with decades of valuable institutional knowledge. Furthermore, advancements in water treatment and supply technology have increased the skills and training required of this workforce. Our industry must address the need to train the next generation of skilled workers to protect and provide what is arguably the most valuable resource that is essential to all life—clean water.

About the NDRWSA Apprenticeship Program

The NDRWSA Apprenticeship Program, recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor, provides guideline standards for apprenticeship. Apprentices will attend an approximate 2-year training program comprising classroom technical instruction and on-the-job training, providing apprentices with the tools to become successful operations specialists in their communities. During the apprenticeship program, apprentices will earn while they learn from knowledgeable, passionate people who strive to deliver clean drinking water to their community and treat wastewater before returning to the environment. Students start the program with a job and emerge with a solid and secure career as a Water Operations Specialist or Wastewater Operations Specialist. Currently, our program has seven enrolled apprentices.

Cost to the Apprentice/System

The two-year NDRWSA Apprenticeship Program costs approximately \$4,000. The system and/or the apprentice pay for that cost. Funding provided by this bill would cover up to 75% of the program's cost. The system and/or individual would still have a financial stake in the process. The proposed state grant is a minimal investment to address our industry's workforce issues and to help provide safe, clean water to our residents.

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on behalf of the NDRWSA members. If you have any questions, contact me at ericvolk@ndrw.org.



Letter of Support – S.B. 2239

Tuesday, March 18th, 2025

Chairman Warrey and members of the House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee,

For the record, my name is Cale Dunwoody, Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo-Moorhead-West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber). On behalf of our 1,700 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 2239, which aims to establish an apprenticeship grant program.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. Our members continue to express concerns about the availability of high-quality, skilled workers and a strong workforce pipeline. While the workforce shortage across the United States is narrowing, North Dakota remains one of the states most affected by workforce challenges. The U.S. Chamber estimates that there are approximately only 30 available workers for every 100 open jobs in North Dakota, compared to the national rate of 83 available workers for every 100 open jobs. This suggests that more must be done to attract, retain, develop, and match employees with in-demand jobs.

Apprenticeships continue to be an innovative option for addressing our critical workforce needs while simultaneously training and educating new employees. In recent years, North Dakota has seen a 28.4% increase in apprenticeships from 2021 to 2024. High participation in apprenticeship programs creates a positive economic impact, as earnings occur alongside learning, creating a pipeline of already skilled workers. Additionally, it is an effective workforce retention strategy. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 92% of apprentices continue employment after completing a Registered Apprenticeship, earning an average starting salary of \$72,000. Those who complete apprenticeship programs earn higher wages over their lifetime, making approximately \$6,595 more annually than non-apprentice employees in the same field with similar backgrounds. Employers also benefit from these programs, seeing a typical return on investment of 44.3%.

Offering grants to eligible individuals participating in apprenticeships bolsters our ability to develop a talented workforce pipeline, ultimately addressing critical workforce shortages throughout the state and building a more robust economy. As this committee considers this bill, we respectfully urge it to give the bill a **DO PASS** recommendation to further enhance apprenticeship opportunities and workforce development throughout our state.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to North Dakota business community.

Sincerely,

Cale Dunwoody
Vice President of Public Policy
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce



North Dakota Senate

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Senator Josh Boschee

District 44
736 Elm Street North, Apt. 8
Fargo, ND 58102-3859
jboschee@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:

Education
Workforce Development

SB 2239 Testimony Senate Appropriations Committee - HR Division March 18, 2025

Chair Warrey and Members of the House Industry Business & Labor Committee,

SB 2239 creates a grant program to support apprenticeships throughout the state.

During the 2023 legislative session, the Assembly supported the expansion of the North Dakota Scholarship to cover expenses related to North Dakota students enrolling in approved apprenticeships in North Dakota. This was to support students who followed their Choice Ready plan to enter the workforce through a registered apprenticeship. It also supported the goal of the Workforce Development Council to grow apprenticeship opportunities to train qualified workers for North Dakota businesses, which continues to be a priority of the WDC.

As the newly enacted statute was implemented, it was realized that many of the students who wished to access the North Dakota Scholarship for their registered apprenticeship did not qualify for the Scholarship. In an effort to continue to support the Workforce Development Council's goal to grow registered apprenticeship opportunities and assist individuals of any age level with the ability to afford the startup costs associated with many apprenticeships, the creation of this grant program is before you.

As written, the funding would be appropriated to the Department of Labor & Human Rights as we thought a Division of Apprenticeships would have been created in the Department. With HB 1036 not passing the House, I think it would be appropriate to determine if there is another agency to host the grant program.

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Industry, Business and Labor Committee Room JW327C, State Capitol

SB 2239
3/26/2025

A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 34-05 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to an apprenticeship grant program; and to provide an appropriation.

9:54 a. m. Chairman Warrey opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman Warrey, Vice Chairman Ostlie, Vice Chairman Johnson, Representatives Bahl, C. Brown, T. Brown, Finley-DeVile, Grindberg, Kasper, Koppelman, D. Ruby, Schauer, Vollmer

Member Absent: Representatives Schatz

Discussion Topics:

- Public money investment
- Return on investment
- Workforce development
- Matching funds
- Eligibility requirements

9:56 Nathan Svihovec, Director of North Dakota Government Relations, Essentia Health, answered questions.

10:10 a.m. Jason Elhert, President, ND Building Trades Unions, answered questions.

10:16 a.m. Katie Raulston Howe, Workforce Development Director, ND Commerce Department, answered questions.

10:36 a.m. Ryan Kelly, representing the International Union of Painters & Allied Trades, District Council 82 AFL-CIO #44177.

10:42 a.m. Representative D. Ruby moved Do Not Pass.

10:42 a.m. Representative Bahl will second the motion.

10:43 a.m. Representative D. Ruby withdrew the motion.

10:43 a.m. Representative Warrey moved to adopt the amendment language to change Labor Department with the Commerce Department, #44300.

10:43 a.m. Representative D. Ruby seconded the motion.

Voice vote.

Motion passed.

10:44 a.m. Representative D. Ruby moved Do Not Pass as amended.

10:44 a.m. Representative Bahl seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Jonathan Warrey	N
Representative Mitch Ostlie	N
Representative Jorin Johnson	Y
Representative Landon Bahl	Y
Representative Collette Brown	N
Representative Timothy Brown	N
Representative Lisa Finley-DeVile	N
Representative Karen Grindberg	N
Representative Jim Kasper	Y
Representative Ben Koppelman	Y
Representative Dan Ruby	Y
Representative Mike Schatz	AB
Representative Austin Schauer	N
Representative Daniel R. Vollmer	Y

Motion failed 6-7-1

10:52 a.m. Representative Koppelman moved to further amend by adding 2-1 matching funds.

10:55 a.m. Representative Koppelman withdrew his motion.

11:02 a.m. Chairman Warrey closed the meeting.

Diane Lillis, Committee Clerk

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO
FIRST ENGROSSMENT**

CO
4/1/25
10fz

ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 2239

Introduced by

Senators Boschee, Axtman, Wobbema

Representatives O'Brien, Schauer, Schreiber-Beck

- 1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter ~~34-05~~54-60 of the North Dakota
2 Century Code, relating to an apprenticeship grant program; and to provide an appropriation.

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

4 ~~SECTION 1. A new section to chapter 34-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is created~~
5 ~~and enacted as follows:~~

6 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 54-60 of the North Dakota Century Code is created
7 and enacted as follows:

8 **Apprenticeship grant program.**

- 9 1. The ~~labor~~ commissioner shall administer an apprenticeship grant program to provide
10 grants to eligible individuals enrolled in qualifying registered apprenticeship programs
11 within this state.
- 12 2. The ~~labor~~ commissioner, in collaboration with the United States department of labor
13 and the state board for career and technical education shall:
- 14 a. Establish eligibility guidelines for the program, including requiring full-time
15 enrollment, program progress, and a minimum grade point average or its
16 equivalent; and
- 17 b. Award an eligible individual up to three thousand dollars within a three-year
18 period while enrolled in an eligible program.

19 **SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF ~~LABOR AND HUMAN~~**

20 **~~RIGHTS~~COMMERCE - APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM.** There is appropriated out of

- 1 any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of
- 2 \$1,100,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the department of ~~labor and human~~
- 3 ~~rights~~commerce for the purpose of administering an apprenticeship grant program, for the
- 4 biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027.



International Union of Painters & Allied Trades District Council 82

AFL-CIO

Affiliated Locals, 61 - 106 - 386 - 681 - 880 - 1324 - 1922 - 1962 - 2002

Testimony-IN SUPPORT OF SB 2239

John Burcaw

Director Of Academic Education Chief Administrative Officer for the Finishing Trades Institute Upper Midwest

Jeff Stark

Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer for the International Union of Painters & Allied Trades District Council 82
North Dakota House of Representatives Industry, Bussiness and Labor Committee

MArch 26, 2025

Chairman Warrey and members of the Committee. On behalf of the Finishing Trades Institute Upper Midwest and the International Union of Painters and Finishing Trades (IUPAT), I am here today to offer our support for the creation of a North Dakota State Office of Apprenticeship through Senat Bill 2239.

The International Union of Painters & Allied Trades District Council 82 provides a voice for nearly 3,500 workers in the finishing trades across Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and western Wisconsin. Our members are trained in a variety of industry needs, including industrial and commercial painting, drywall finishing, glazing, glass work, sign installation, convention workers, and embroidery.

Our support for the creation of a North Dakota Office of Apprenticeship is not a union or non-union matter, it is about expanding the opportunities hard-working North Dakotans looking to develop their skills, advance their careers, and strengthen the North Dakota economy. As we see a continuing workforce issue throughout the building trades, training and development of new workers is imperative. By expanding opportunities to participate in the building trades, more North Dakotans will have a path towards long-term stable gainful employment in an industry whose success can help lower the cost of living and make North Dakota more affordable for us all.

As an industry, the building trades have experienced the failures of the Federal Department of Labors' Office of Apprenticeship. We have seen significant delays in communication, insurmountable red tape and bureaucracy, and a federal attitude of apathy towards the Midwest region. This is sharply contrasted with North Dakota government's proven track record of effective action.

By creating a North Dakota State Office of Apprenticeship, you all have the opportunity to join states such as Montana, Idaho, and Kansas who have taken the bold step of resisting federal apathy and empowering businesses and their employees to help shape and strengthen the future of our economy.

Like many other organizations and businesses in North Dakota, we are struggling to find more workers. The North Dakota State Office of Apprenticeship will help both labor and management equally and show that the state of North Dakota is serious about attracting new workers in this highly competitive workforce market.

Our members are looking for a commitment to the future of the building trades, and the creation of a North Dakota State Office of Apprenticeship will provide that commitment.

Chairman Warrey and members of the Committee, we believe the creation of a North Dakota State Office of Apprenticeship through SB 2239 will strongly signal your support in finding solutions to the critical workforce shortages we are facing.

Please give a "DO PASS" recommendation to SB 2239.

SB 2239 Amendment –

SECTION 1. A new section to chapter ~~34-05~~ 54-60 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

Apprenticeship grant program.

1. The ~~labor-commerce~~ commissioner shall administer an apprenticeship grant program to provide grants to eligible individuals enrolled in qualifying registered apprenticeship program within this state.
2. The ~~labor-commerce~~ commissioner, in collaboration with the United States department of labor and the state board for career and technical education shall:
 - a. Establish eligibility guidelines for the program, including requiring full-time enrollment, program progress, and a minimum grade point average or its equivalent; and
 - b. Award an eligible individual up to three thousand dollars within a three-year period while enrolled in an eligible program.

SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF ~~LABOR AND HUMAN RIGHTS~~ ~~COMMERCE~~ - APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$1,100,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the department of ~~labor and human rights~~commerce for the purpose of administering an apprenticeship grant program, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027.

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Industry, Business and Labor Committee Room JW327C, State Capitol

SB 2239

4/1/2025

A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 34-05 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to an apprenticeship grant program; and to provide an appropriation.

4:05 p.m. Chairman Warrey opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman Warrey, Vice Chairman Ostlie, Vice Chairman Johnson, Representatives Bahl, C. Brown, T. Brown, Finley-DeVille, Grindberg, Kasper, Koppelman, D. Ruby, Schauer, Schatz, Vollmer

Members Absent: Representatives Bahl, C. Brown

Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action

4:06 p.m. Representative Kasper moved Do Not Pass as amended (LC# 25.0612.03001 amendment passed 3/26/25).

4:06 p.m. Representative Schatz seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Jonathan Warrey	Y
Representative Mitch Ostlie	Y
Representative Jorin Johnson	Y
Representative Landon Bahl	AB
Representative Collette Brown	AB
Representative Timothy Brown	Y
Representative Lisa Finley-DeVille	N
Representative Karen Grindberg	Y
Representative Jim Kasper	Y
Representative Ben Koppelman	AB
Representative Dan Ruby	Y
Representative Mike Schatz	Y
Representative Austin Schauer	N
Representative Daniel R. Vollmer	Y

Motion passed 9-2-3.

4:11 p.m. Representative Ostlie will carry the bill.

4:11 p.m. Chairman Warrey closed the meeting.

Diane Lillis, Committee Clerk

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
ENGROSSED SB 2239**

Industry, Business and Labor Committee (Rep. Warrey, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS ([25.0612.03001](#))** and when so amended, recommends **DO NOT PASS** (9 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 3 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed SB 2239 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.