

**Senate Education
SB2272**

January 27, 2021

Chairman Schaible and members of the committee, my name is Wayde Sick, State Director of the Department of Career and Technical Education. I am submitting testimony in support of SB2272.

SB2272 or the Career Builders bill, will continue and improve upon a program that was created during the 2019 Legislative Session. This program provided funding for scholarships and student loan repayment for students and graduates that pursued high wage, high skill, in-demand occupations and remain employed in the state. This program, as you know, also required a one-to-one private sector match, ensuring that business and industry was partnering with the State to meet our workforce challenges. SB2272 broadens the eligibility of the Career Builders program to students that attend the State's various Postsecondary Career Schools. Examples of Postsecondary Career Schools in the state include Lynnes Welding and Emerging Digital Academy. North Dakota Century Code Chapter 15-20.4 gives the State Board for Career and Technical Education the authority to approve the operation of private Postsecondary Career Schools. Allowing the Career Builders scholarship and student loan repayment program to be available to training programs such as these would provide financial support for students who choose to take a different training path, enter the workforce, stay in the state and possibly debt free.

I do have a recommendation for a minor change to SB2272, which wouldn't change the intent of the bill, but instead uses language that may better reflect NDCC

Chapter 15-20.4. On page 4, line 6, the bill contains the language that allows the funding to be used for North Dakota institutions licensed by the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education. My recommendation is we change that language to “North Dakota institutions approved to operate by the State Board for Career and Technical Education.” As previously stated, the State Board has the authority to approve the operation of the private postsecondary career schools, not the Department, although the Department completes the application review and recommends approval or denial to the State Board. In reviewing applications, the Department reviews quality of education, ethical and business practices and health, safety and fiscal responsibility. Also, the State Board does not issue a license, it is an approval to operate.

This concludes my testimony and I am happy to answer any questions.

Thank you.