



To: Senate IBL Committee
From: Katie Mastel, Government Affairs Manager, FMWF Chamber of Commerce
Date: March 10, 2021
RE: **Support HB 1425**

Chair Klein, members of the Senate IBL Committee,

For the record my name is Katie Mastel, and I serve as the Government Affairs & Advocacy Manager at the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce. On behalf of our over 2,000 Chamber member businesses, **we urge support for business liability protection as reflected in House Bill 1175.**

Businesses across North Dakota of all sizes and industries have worked tirelessly to protect employees and customers from the threat of COVID-19. Often following burdensome precautions, businesses put the health and safety of others in front of their business's economic stability. As businesses continue to navigate through, and enter into, the recovery phase of the COVID-19 crisis, the concern of frivolous lawsuits claiming COVID-19 related damages is looming. Masses of lawsuits in a time of economic recovery would be detrimental to many businesses and our overall economy. The threat frivolous lawsuits impose particularly on our small businesses is damaging revenue losses, or in some cases, closure.

Many businesses, in good faith, followed public health guidelines to the best of their ability, and as such, deserve the assurance that their responsibility in taking those appropriate measures relieves them from facing additional financial hardships due to frivolous lawsuits.

Our members were very vocal about their need for liability protection from unwarranted COVID-19 lawsuits as they recognize the sizeable threat that these lawsuits carry. It is imperative to secure this protection for our businesses who worked so hard to protect the health and safety of their employees and customers in the toughest of times.

We were glad to see this legislation gain the overwhelming support of the House. We respectfully request a do pass recommendation for **House Bill 1175** from this committee. Thank you for your consideration.

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