

Sixty-eighth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 2142

Introduced by

Senators Mathern, K. Roers, Sorvaag

Representatives Ista, Meier, Mitskog

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 54-60 of the North Dakota
2 Century Code, relating to the creation of an office of legal immigration; to provide an
3 appropriation; and to provide for a report.

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

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

7 **Office of legal immigration - Duties ~~--Fees.~~**

8 There is created an office of legal immigration within the department of commerce.

9 Employees of the office of legal immigration report to the commissioner ~~and shall.~~ The office of
10 legal immigration:

11 ~~1. Coordinate and expedite the immigration process and placement of international~~
12 ~~workers immigrating to North Dakota for employment.~~

13 ~~2. Support recently immigrated individuals by assisting with any financial, legal, housing,~~
14 ~~or other immigration-related applications, forms, or communications necessary to~~
15 ~~provide for successful immigration to the state.~~

16 ~~3. Collaborate with employers to establish a system to assist immigrants with accessing~~
17 ~~basic housing, food, and other essential services necessary to provide for successful~~
18 ~~immigration to the state.~~

19 ~~4. Create a communication system among immigrated individuals to provide a network~~
20 ~~for immigrants to share community resources and provide immigration process~~
21 ~~assistance.~~

22 ~~5. Provide outreach services to current and potential immigrants to encourage additional~~
23 ~~individuals to immigrate to North Dakota for employment.~~

~~6. Develop guidelines and procedures for a fee system to be assessed to each business benefiting from employment of immigrant workers as a result of assistance provided by the office of immigration to offset administrative costs of the office of immigration by July 1, 2025. Revenue collected from immigration assistance fees and any interest earned on these moneys must be deposited in the economic development fund for the benefit of the office of immigration, subject to legislative appropriations.~~

1. Shall develop and implement a statewide strategy to support businesses in recruiting and retaining foreign labor, including immigrants already in the United States and integration of immigrants into the state to promote economic opportunities for immigrant communities.

2. Shall advise and make recommendations to the governor, legislative assembly, and state agencies regarding immigrant integration and foreign labor issues.

3. Shall develop a pilot program to support businesses pursuing or employing legal immigrants and to support communities to develop immigration integration plans and activities.

4. May contract with other state agencies to develop and administer programs or services related to immigration integration and access to basic needs that promote entrance and movement throughout the workforce.

5. May contract with an organization with expertise related to the goals of the office of legal immigration.

SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE - OFFICE OF LEGAL IMMIGRATION - FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT POSITIONS - REPORT TO SIXTY-NINTH

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY -- ~~ONE-TIME FUNDING~~. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of ~~\$242,500~~\$485,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, ~~and out of any moneys in the economic development fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$242,500, or so much of the sum as may be necessary,~~ to the department of commerce for the purpose of providing salaries and benefits for office of legal immigration staff, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2025. The department of commerce is authorized ~~one~~two full-time equivalent ~~position~~positions to administer the office of legal immigration. The department of commerce shall report to the sixty-ninth legislative assembly regarding the

1 number of immigrants and employers assisted through the office of legal immigration during the
2 2023-25 biennium. ~~The \$242,500 appropriation from the general fund in this section is~~
3 ~~considered a one-time funding item.~~

4 **SECTION 3. ~~LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT~~DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE STUDY -**
5 **IMMIGRATION - ~~BUDGET SECTION REPORT~~ - REPORT TO SIXTY-NINTH LEGISLATIVE**

6 **ASSEMBLY.** During the 2023-24 interim, the ~~legislative management~~department of commerce
7 shall conduct a study ~~the immigration needs in the state.~~ ~~The study must include input from the~~
8 ~~department of commerce regarding the implementation of the office of immigration, the number~~
9 ~~of immigrants assisted, efficiencies gained in helping immigrant individuals with the immigration~~
10 ~~process, collaborative efforts with businesses, the status of the immigration communication~~
11 ~~system, the status of developing a fee system to defray the administrative costs of the office,~~
12 ~~and other immigration needs in the state. The study must be completed by July 1, 2024. The~~
13 ~~interim committee assigned the responsibility for this study shall provide a recommendation~~
14 ~~regarding the current and future immigration needs of the state and the role of the office of~~
15 ~~immigration to the budget section.~~ The legislative management to determine immigration
16 opportunities in the state, goals of the office of legal immigration, performance indicators to
17 measure progress and success of immigration goals, and a structure for a pilot program to
18 support businesses and communities pursuing legal immigration, and to develop a fee-based
19 system for services to be implemented in the 2025-27 biennium. The study must include input
20 from employers in the state. The department of commerce shall report its findings and
21 recommendations, ~~together with any legislation required to implement the recommendations,~~ to
22 the sixty-ninth legislative assembly.