

2023 SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SB 2151

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Workforce Development Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

SB 2151
1/26/2023

Relating to the creation of an office of immigration and the immigration workforce loan program; to provide a transfer; to provide an appropriation; and to provide for a report.

11:15 AM **Chairman Wobbema** called the hearing to order. **Senators Wobbema, Axtman, Elkin, Larson, Sickler, Piepkorn** are present.

Discussion Topics:

- Legal immigrant workforce
- Office of immigration
- Immigration loan program
- Rural family recruiting program

11:17 AM **Tim Mathern, introduced SB 2151** with Amendments verbal testimony in favor # 17121

11:28 AM **Bill Patrie, Vice President Communities Acting Together for Change and Hope** testimony in favor #16391

11:35 AM **Marcia Patrie, retired teacher** testimony in favor #16903

11:40 AM **Tom Erdmann, Mayor Carrington ND** testimony in favor #16798

11:48 AM **Shannon Full, President/CEO of Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo, Chamber of Commerce** online testimony in favor #17051

11:54 AM **Jerol Gorick, President Sons of Liberty** verbal testimony in opposition

11:57 AM **Travis Zabloutney** verbal testimony in opposition

Additional written testimony:

Alexandra Tsibur-Mayer in favor #16527

Joel Mayer in favor #16540

Sylvia Bull in favor #16676

Patti Larson, Treasurer, Communities Acting Together for Change and Hope in favor #16790

Abdishakur Mohamed in favor #16858

Dawn Mandt, Executive Director, Red River Regional Council in favor #16887

Tim Blasl, President, North Dakota Hospital Association in favor #16916

Loren Myran in favor #16919

Megan Langley in favor #16925

Thomas Graner, President, Communities Acting Together for Change and Hope in favor #16963, #16964

Patricia Nyei in favor #16965

Megan Carranza in favor #16982

Nicholas Scotten, Pastor, Elim Evangelical Free Church in opposition #17015

Julie Ramos Lagos, Executive Director, Bismarck Global Neighbors in favor #17017

Ericka Schapekahn, Director of Human Resources, Coffee Cup Travel Plazas in favor #17052

Gabriela Balf, Physician in favor #17056

Hamida Dakane, Representative in favor #17123

Jocelyn Backman in opposition #15471

Gordon Greenstein in opposition #16492

Vicki Grafin in opposition #16987

12:08 PM **Chairman Wobbema** closed the hearing.

Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Workforce Development Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

SB 2151
1/27/2023

Relating to the creation of an office of immigration and the immigration workforce loan program; to provide a transfer; to provide an appropriation; and to provide for a report.

9:00 AM **Chairman Wobbema** called the hearing to order. **Senators Wobbema, Axtman, Elkin, Larson, Sickler, Piepkorn** are present.

Discussion Topics:

- Workforce
- Immigration workforce advisory board
- Loan program and guidelines

9:02 AM **Andrea Pfennig, Director of Government Affairs, Greater North Dakota Chamber** testimony in favor verbal

9:06 AM **Art Dohrmann, resident**, testimony in favor verbal

9:10 A.M. **Kelvin Hullet, Chief Business Development Officer, Bank of North Dakota** with amendments proposed by Senator Mathern 23.0091.05002 #17121 verbal testimony in neutral.

9:23 AM **Chairman Wobbema** closed the hearing.

Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Workforce Development Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

SB 2151
2/2/2023

Relating to the creation of an office of immigration and the immigration workforce loan program; to provide a transfer; to provide an appropriation; and to provide for a report.

9:04 AM **Chairman Wobbema** called the meeting to order. **Senators Wobbema, Axtman, Elkin, Larson, Sickler, Piepkorn** are present.

Discussion Topics:

- Individual and family immigration
- Fee system
- Immigration development board

9:05 AM **Senator Wobbema** presented amendment 23.0091.05004 #18784

9:36 AM **Lindsey Pouliot, Legislative Intern, Legislative Council** provided information on SB 2142 #18794

9:36 AM **Kelvin Hullet, Chief Development Business Officer, Bank of North Dakota** provided information verbally.

10:03 AM **Senator Larson** moved **DO NOT PASS**

10:04 **Senator Elkin** seconded.

10:05 Roll call vote.

Senators	Vote
Senator Michael A. Wobbema	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	Y
Senator Jay Elkin	Y
Senator Diane Larson	Y
Senator Merrill Piepkorn	N
Senator Jonathan Sickler	Y

Motion Passes 5-1-0.

Senator Wobbema will carry SB 2151

10:07 AM **Chairman Wobbema** closed the meeting.

Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2151: Workforce Development Committee (Sen. Wobbema, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (5 YEAS, 1 NAY, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2151 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar. This bill affects workforce development.

TESTIMONY

SB 2151

Do NOT Pass Testimony

Citizen of ND

On SB 2151

In the 68th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota

Dear Workforce Development Committee,

I am a citizen of ND and am writing in opposition of SB 2151 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new chapter to title 6 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the creation of an office of immigration and the immigration workforce loan program; to provide a transfer; to provide an appropriation; and to provide for a report.

I have been a citizen of ND my whole life, and do not believe that funding a program like this is a benefit to me and my family, nor the people of ND. I have worked my whole life, paid taxes and have never been offered this type of incentive to live in ND. I do not believe that using our Legacy Funds is appropriate for this type of project.

Please NO NOT Pass this legislation.

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Backman

District 13 Resident

Testimony of William Patrie to the Senate Workforce Development Committee
Senate Bill 2151 January 26, 2023

Senator Wobbema and members of the Committee on Workforce Development

My name is Bill Patrie. I am grateful for the opportunity to support Senate Bill 2151. I am grateful also for its sponsors who have put their names on the bill. I served as the director of the Economic Development Commission during the administration of George Sinner and as rural development director for the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives. I also served as the executive director of North Central Planning Council in Devils Lake which served Rolette, Towner, Cavalier, Ramsey, Benson and Eddy Counties. My wife is a retired school teacher who works with Dickinson State University supervising practice teachers and I am also retired and involved in a number of non-profit organizations. My wife and I live North of Bismarck and have raised chickens and sold eggs for the last 7 years. We just quit before egg prices went up.

The bill before you today would be the incentive for 55 families to move to North Dakota, and with the help of an organization being formed “Communities Acting together for Change and Hope” (CATCH) and other communities and organization, demonstrate that rural places can again become destinations for people seeking a good place to live, work, and raise their families.

To my knowledge, no other state currently is thinking of workforce development in terms of recruiting families; rather they are thinking of filling jobs. This bill uniquely equips faith-based organizations to work with economic development organizations at the community level to demonstrate this approach to workforce development works.

I would suggest modest amendments to the bill as drafted.

1. Change the name Immigration Workforce Advisory Board to Immigration Workforce Development Board.
2. On line 12 add Federal Agencies to the list of organizations the Board will collaborate with.
3. On line 17 replace “provide” with “contract for” legal services
4. Target the funding in this bill to cities with populations of 10,000 or less
5. Allow the Immigration Development Board to continue to accept applications during the first biennium even if all appropriated funds are committed so the 2025 legislature could understand what demand exists.

SB 2151 shifts some of the responsibility for recruiting workers to North Dakota from State Agencies and private businesses to communities. While it is true that businesses in those communities will be active to recruit employees, the entire community, including churches and schools, want families to come and live there permanently.

The Find the Good Life program through the Department of Commerce is a marketing program for workers. Find the Good Life provides state money to help companies partially cover sign on bonuses, retention bonuses, moving fees and short-term rental costs. The Department of Commerce is contracting with a firm to market its programs. The Bismarck Tribune carried a

story on Tuesday, January 24, 2023 that said 9 people had been attracted to the state since the program was restarted in June of last year.

There is a significant difference between the approach to workforce development envisioned in SB2151 and Find the Good Life. Rather than competing with other states to attract foot loose workers, SB2151 targets families already pushed from their homes and countries because of war, starvation, crime, or persecution. Some of those families may be immigrants and some maybe refugees. They are not likely to be foot loose individuals looking for a better job. They may already be doctors, plumbers, entrepreneurs, translators, teachers, nurses, dairy farmers, grain farmers, beef producers and pork producers and yes, willing manual laborers who know how to work. And they will have kids who quickly assimilate into schools and become homecoming kings and queens. This suggested approach is not naïve, rather, it is the history of North Dakota's rural communities.

Those of us involved in CATCH know that this program is not for every community. The communities we are interested in working with, will have churches and businesses and community residents that will welcome refugees and immigrants. There will be some type of community consensus achieved before any community proceeds to seek families that will use funds proposed in this bill to locate in their town.

The Immigration Development Board will need clear policies on how communities are selected, what the loan proceeds can be used for, how the loan recipients qualify and how the loans are monitored and supported. The Immigration Board makeup proposed in this bill will provide that expertise. It would be my hope that the \$160,000 loans be used for fixed assets that remain in the community even after the initial borrower might leave. Much like the Homestead Act, this program allows immigrants to "prove up" their claim and after 10 years have a real tangible asset on their balance sheet. They win and so does the community.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this proposed bill is the shift from professional recruiters trying to find workers to families helping families. My wife and I have worked with refugee families and have hosted a teenage refugee who finished the last three years of high school while living with us. We helped him get his drivers license, learn to drive a five-speed manual transmission, complete his homework and find work to pay his own way. We did that without a written agreement between his family who moved to Louisville, Kentucky and us. He is now in Arizona going to college. If SB 2151 had been in place, I think it likely that his family would still be working in North Dakota and Eric would be in a North Dakota college.

I want to point out that should this Legislature pass this bill, using the only state-owned bank in the country to finance refugees and immigrants, you are likely to receive national attention. No other state can do what you are proposing to do. The Bank of North Dakota financed part of my college education. I paid back the principal and interest on that loan a long time ago. But I continue to return positive dividends for the State that bet on me to succeed. Investing in people who want to live in this state is the highest form of workforce development.

Thank you again for this opportunity and I will be glad to answer questions.

SB 2151 Do Not Pass

Gordon Greenstein

Bismarck, ND District 35

Chairman Wobbema and Workforce Development Committee, I highly recommend a Do Not Pass on SB 2151. Many citizens and I are wondering when we will get some benefit from the Legacy Fund. After doing a little research, I found an article saying that the Legacy Fund should benefit all citizens of North Dakota, not just a chosen few that are stated in this deceitful Bill

I believe if this piece of legislation is passed, will lead to another welfare system, ran by unelected bureaucrats. As a lifelong resident of North Dakota, when will I be able to get a loan like this, UNBELIEVABLE. This should be handled by private banks or credit unions. I am sure that NO private lending institution would issue loans to high risk applicants. Handing out \$160,000 of our Legacy Fund to high risk applicants with loan forgiveness is just irresponsible.

I am wondering if the supporters of this bill, Mathern, DaKane, Davison, Hogue, LeFor and Nathe would use their own money to loan to these high risk applicants? I DOUBT IT. It is easy to use someone else's money. Shame on these legislators for trying to import low wage workers, stab our working class in the back and make the taxpayers foot the bill. I support a Do Not Pass on SB 2151

Gordon Greenstein

US Navy (Veteran)

US Army (NDNG Retired)

Do Pass Testimony

Citizen of ND

On SB 2151

In the 68th Legislative Assembly of ND

Dear Workforce Development Committee,

I am a citizen of ND and am writing in support of SB 2151 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new chapter to title 6 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the creation of an office of immigration and the immigration workforce loan program; to provide a transfer; to provide an appropriation; and to provide for a report.

North Dakota is facing a worker shortage crisis. Baby boomers are retiring and there are not enough younger native North Dakotans to fill the void. Several well established restaurants closed recently in Bismarck area citing lack of help. I work in healthcare, and one of my friends had to work 10-12 hour days for 20 days without a day off because her department is that short on help. My part of the state has no reliable home care in rural areas. Nursing homes have not been fully staffed since before COVID. There are huge shortages of not just nursing related positions, but also maintenance, dietary and laundry, entry level positions that would require no professional degree and would be perfect for people who just arrived. North Dakota can either continue to ignore the problem and face its elderly population being left without caregivers, or be proactive in creating a welcoming and supportive environment to immigrant workforce, to the benefit of both sides.

I am also an immigrant and have lived and worked in this state for 28 years, 14 of them as a citizen. US immigration system is not easy to navigate under ideal circumstances, even knowing the language and having access to transportation it was difficult, confusing and expensive for me to go through the process. I know many people who would have liked to stay and work in this state, that eventually gave up and moved to areas that did have immigration support networks. This state was created by immigrants who traveled here because of the promise of free land. It seems like just a few generations later their descendants forgot they used to be in the same boat. I urge you to pass this bill, so this state's economy can continue to grow and diversify, so the elderly that have worked so hard in this state can continue to have care that they deserve. This is exactly what Legacy Funds should be used for. Please vote DO PASS.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Tsibur-Mayer

District 36

Do Pass Testimony

Citizen of ND

On SB 2151

In the 68th Legislative Assembly of ND

Dear Workforce Development Committee,

I wish to write in support of this bill on 2 grounds: historical and pragmatic.

On the historical many of our predecessors were given incentives to move here from other parts of the country and around the world. We now look at the "Homestead Act" as a wonderful part of history that made moving out here appealing, and affordable, to people who were willing to work hard and to make this a better place by improving their land and taking advantage of its resources. Many of us have benefited in the decades since those brave pioneers moved here. Whether they were our direct ancestors or not they set up the towns, cities, and communities in which we live.

For the pragmatic we've all read about how hard it is to find workers to fill roles. Whether those roles are white collar professionals or blue collar workers that help our communities in so many ways. There is a plethora of data about how many open positions there are at all levels of employment. Why wouldn't we want to do everything we can to encourage people to come here to take those jobs. So many of our citizens who have lived here all their lives are now aging out of the workforce and there isn't always somebody with the skills and willingness to take their place. Doesn't it make sense to cast as wide of a net as possible to both assist those who are looking to fulfill the "American Dream" AND also help our businesses and communities become enriched by an influx of people who just want to work hard, raise their family, and contribute in any way they can.

Over the years I have had the honor of meeting many immigrants. These are not people looking for a "handout." These are people that are looking for a way they can come here legally and contribute. And an office like this can both help them fill those dreams and help businesses across the state to fill their open roles and drive them to success.

Sincerely,

Joel Mayer

District 36

January 25, 2023

Chairperson Wobbema and Committee Members,

I strongly urge a DO Pass on SB 2151. The North Dakota we live in today was in large part built by immigrant individuals and families searching for a better life and choosing to make their home here. It is in keeping with the heritage and history of our state, and an expression of gratitude to our ancestors, to support new immigrants and their families in establishing a life here. Refugees and immigrants already are key parts of our communities across the state, bringing a rich depth of skills, experiences, and values that contribute to the shared future of North Dakota. Passing this bill to establish an office of immigration and the immigration workforce loan program are solid, thoughtful steps toward bolstering support of this amazing population within North Dakota and also addressing our workforce crisis.

I urge a DO Pass on SB 2151.

Sincerely,
Sylvia Bull
522 N 16th St
Bismarck, ND 58501

Support for SB2151

I'm Patti Larson. I serve as treasurer of CATCH (Communities Acting Together for Change and Hope). I'm currently on my second term of the New Rockford-Sheyenne school board. Peter and I farm and ranch along the Sheyenne River west of Sheyenne, ND (east central ND). Peter's grandfather left Sweden at the age of 14, in search of a better life and he found it in Valhalla township on the county line of Eddy and Wells. He, his three brothers, and 3 generations of descendants that followed, absolutely lived and are living successful lives because North Dakota had land and opportunity.

I support SB2151. The opportunity for a better life is still here! Rural North Dakota is a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family. Sheyenne has updated infrastructure, job openings, great neighbors and empty houses. We just need more people. SB2151 is a meaningful incentive to bring immigrants to ND communities.

Testimony of Carrington Mayor Tom Erdmann to the Senate Workforce Development Committee Senate Bill 2151 January 26, 2023

Senator Wobbema and members of the Committee on Workforce Development.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2151. I'm presently the Mayor of Carrington, our family has resided here for the past 46 years. Carrington is a rural community in the center of our great state with a population of 2080. Carrington is primarily an agricultural community with several amenities supporting agriculture. We are the home of Dakota Growers Pasta Company which sells pasta products all over the United States.

I have spent 30 plus years working with our local economic development and City government to attract and retain businesses, to ensure our residents employment opportunities and provide a solid quality of life for workers and their families. Like most rural communities we are struggling to maintain a workforce for our businesses and farmers. There are job openings in almost every field, and we continue to recruit workers from other Cities and surrounding states, which has not been productive nor filled all the job openings and career opportunities here.

I'm on the board of CATCH: "Communities Acting together for Change and Hope", a newly formed organization to demonstrate that rural places can again become destinations for people seeking a good place to live, work and raise their families. CATCH is primarily seeking to recruit refugee and immigrant families to our rural communities to, yes, help fill the job openings but to help in a humanitarian way to give these families an opportunity to start over.

Watching the national news and shows like 60 minutes there are thousands of families seeking asylum from war thrown areas. As these families are interviewed they want to come to America to start over and they are willing to work and not be a burden to our social services programs. Some of our Federal government red tape doesn't allow for a speedy process, which then does burden our social services programs.

Carrington continues to be on the forefront of working with immigrants. Presently our Golden Acres Manor Nursing Home is working with a firm to acquire immigrant RNs and CNAs. Owner Mitch Page has plans of bringing in 26 nurses over the coming 2 years. Thus far he has acquired 3 nurses with one of the nurse's spouses hired for a maintenance position. Our Carrington Health Center is also working with a firm to seek immigrant nurses. Our community has helped find housing and continues to provide supplies and furnishings for these individuals.

In 2008 we encouraged the Van Bedaf family, a Dutch family with a small dairy, who had moved from the Netherlands to Alberta Canada and due to the cost for milk quota in Canada were seeking to relocate to the US so they could expand their dairy operation from 150 cows to over 1,500 cows. A young family in their 40's with three school-aged children. Not all the residents were in favor of having a 1500 cow dairy near Carrington. The project went forward and today the VanBedaf Dairy is a show case dairy in North Dakota.

Two of their children married school classmates and they presently have three children. Piet is a partner with his parents at the Dairy. Maartje and Casey have started a spin off business with their family dairy known as Cows & Co Creamery making Duchess Gelato and Cheese.

SB 2151 will allow refugees and immigrant the opportunity to start over in rural North Dakota, allowing them the opportunity to get a good job and raise they families in a safe welcoming environment. This proposed legislation is a win-win situation for the refugee/immigrants and our businesses/farmers looking for workers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I will be glad to answer any questions.

Mayor Tom Erdmann

Senate Bill 2151 – IN SUPPORT

Chairman and Members of the Committee,

As an entrepreneur in North Dakota, I am writing to urge you to support the Senate Bill No. 2151.

The senate bill no. 2151 is a bill for an Act to create and enact a new chapter to title 6 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the creation of an office of immigration and the immigration workforce loan program; to provide a transfer; to provide an appropriation; and to provide for a report.

The success of our nation comes, in large part, from our longstanding tradition of encouraging people seeking a better life to leave everything they know to contribute to the United States.

Immigrants are [highly entrepreneurial](#), launching new companies at twice the rate of native-born Americans and creating large numbers of jobs. All of this increases employment opportunities for native-born American workers, boosts wages and strengthens the middle class.

Immigrants are innovators, job creators, and consumers with an enormous spending power that drives our economy, and creates employment opportunities for all Americans.

Immigrants added [\\$2 trillion](#) to the U.S. GDP in 2016 and [\\$458.7 billion](#) to state, local, and federal taxes in 2018. In 2018, after immigrants spent billions of dollars on state and local, and federal taxes, they were left with [\\$1.2 trillion](#) in spending power, which they used to purchase goods and services, stimulating local business activity.

Proposed office to support immigrants would have great impact on our economy

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Abdishakur Mohamed



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Grafton, ND 58237
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www.redriverrc.com

Testimony of Dawn Mandt in support of Senate Bill 2151
to the Senate Workforce Development Committee
January 26, 2023

Senator Wobbema and members of the Committee on Workforce Development

My name is Dawn Mandt. I am grateful for the opportunity to **support Senate Bill 2151**. I am the Executive Director of Red River Regional Council in Region 4 – serving Grand Forks, Nelson, Pembina, and Walsh Counties related to economic and community development.

Over the past two years, our office conducted 130 one-on-one business interviews to listen, learn and develop a clear understanding of both their needs and opportunities. **We uncovered a dire need for workforce in the rural areas of our region that amounts to 1,500 new employees over the next five years. We also revealed that 90% of our companies have projected and planned growth. Workforce, childcare, and housing are our key barriers to enabling this growth.**

We initiated the NE Manufacturing Group several years ago to link the 20+ manufacturing and food processing plants in just Walsh and Pembina County whom employ 1,200 people. These companies include Harriston Industries, Kringstad Ironworks, Marvin, Woodside Industries, Bordertown Retail Systems, and more. These companies are vital to our economic health and vitality in northeastern North Dakota. In its 2020 Strategic Plan, the group **listed the need to cultivate new potential people to the region through the immigration and refugee channels. Without adequately tending to the specific needs of these economic drivers, we are beginning to lose ground.** Motor Coach Industries, a major commercial coach manufacturer, announced the relocation of its Pembina plant to Crookston, MN, in 2022. This will leave 200 employees and 209,000 sq ft manufacturing facility. This company has been in Pembina since 1963.

Just north of the border, Winkler, Manitoba is an excellent case study on the positive impact of targeted immigration. **Fifteen percent (15%) of the community's population is foreign-born with 1,832 immigrants settling in Winkler between 1999 and 2002.** With immigration has come inspiring entrepreneurial growth. This community is located just minutes from Walhalla, North Dakota which has experienced population loss since 1970.

I serve on the Board of Directors for CATCH. This organization initially caught my attention as part of the solution to the critical need for workforce in rural communities. Please support SB 2151.

Testimony for SB2151

Good morning Committee members and ND citizens:

My name is Marcia Patrie and I live north of Bismarck in Dist. 47. I am here to speak in favor of SB2151. I am a retired elementary teacher from Bismarck. I don't have technical or legal expertise in the area of immigration or with economic development but I do have many stories of lives made better by immigration to the United States.

I actually migrated to ND myself from Ohio in 1975, brought here after I married a homesick North Dakota guy. My experience with refugees starts when I was 8 or 9 years old when my parents rented a home to a family of 9 who had just arrived from Holland in the 60's. Their youngest child Debbie (the most American name they knew)was born on the ship on their trip to the United States. The father, Jon Holtslag, told my folks that he was just a watch repairman but a few years later he moved to the DC area where he made parts for NASA. Our families were friends and we went to DC several times to visit them as I was growing up. They brought wonderful skills with them and even in the tiny town in Southwest Ohio population about 800 where I grew up they brought diversity and people found them interesting and fun to be with as we heard their story using a small paper back English/Dutch dictionary.

In 1975 after we had moved to the small community of Penn, ND I was hired in Devils Lake to work with Vietnamese children at the elementary public school and at the Catholic school to teach English. As a teacher I was always interested in their story and in awe. I saw people who had given up so much to come here with hopes of giving their children a better life.

Later, I was hired in Bismarck to work with ELL (English Language Learners) students in the 90's and served all 15 elementary schools for 4 years. I had many training opportunities during those years from a federal program known as Title VII. During my years in Bismarck, I worked with immigrant and refugee families through the school system. I **can't** tell you what the impact was that I had on them, but I can tell you my life and my families' lives were deeply enriched. We went to Naturalization ceremonies for one family who had come after the war in Bosnia-he had been a banker there and was driving a van for a nursing home here in Bismarck. Their son was in my son's wedding years later.

After my retirement I volunteered with LSS to help people learn some basic English, teach some people to drive, and offer a warm welcome to people who needed to make some connections here in our communities. During that time, I worked with a family who had come from Kenya but were originally from the Congo. They had seen more sadness than most of us can imagine. After 2 years they decided to move to Kentucky but their son who was a sophomore at Century didn't want to move in the middle of the year and I talked with his mom saying that he could probably stay with a friend and come to KY after school was out. Never intending that the friend would be us, but it was. He stayed that spring and we put him on a bus to Louisville in May but then, in August before school began I got a call and he was in Fargo wondering if he could come back. For 2 years he lived with us. We followed his soccer team as they won the ND championship in 2020. Not that all was smooth sailing as he was a teenager and we were in the grandparenting stage of life, and on top of that there was covid and distance learning. Now as I look back I see that time as a great experience that allowed me to have an impact on a human being and in return I was richly rewarded with friendships with African families and soccer folks we would have never met.

I see SB2151 as an opportunity to offer families who come here with an incentive to stay because we have something to offer them other states don't. But to also tell the committee that they have something to offer to the state as well. I think there would be families who I know that could have used this loan program to begin a new life here in our hometown communities.

Thank you for listening to me and for your work on this very positive bill that will have an impact, especially in our rural communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Patrie



2023 Senate Bill 2151
Senate Workforce Development Committee
Senator Michael Wobbema, Chairman
January 26, 2023

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee, I am Tim Blasl, President of the North Dakota Hospital Association (NDHA). I testify in support of Senate Bill 2151 and ask that you give the bill a **Do Pass** recommendation.

Hospitals support this bill because it helps address our number one challenge: workforce. Hospitals are challenged to find workers in nearly every health care employee group – not just physicians, advanced practice providers, and nurses but also lab techs, surgical techs, medical imaging techs, housekeeping, dietary, and many others. The health care provider shortage is not just an inconvenience, it is a public health crisis that was building even before the COVID-19 pandemic. More health care workers are leaving the field due to burnout and retirement, thereby aggravating an already critical shortage of workers.

To give an idea of how big this challenge is just in nursing, NDHA conducted a survey last summer. It showed that there were 1,326 nurse openings throughout the state. And hospitals contracted with staffing agencies for another 717 nurses. In total, hospitals have over 2,000 nurse openings. The lack of nurses challenges our hospitals in both the rural and urban areas. They are increasingly paying higher wages to keep and recruit enough staff. Urban hospital wages have increased \$382 million since 2019, mainly due to contract labor. The escalating cost of contracted nursing staff and the upward pressure it puts on wages is not sustainable.

Hospitals have had to focus on how they recruit and retain staff, which is generally through traditional methods such as bonuses and loan forgiveness programs but, while we do more to invest in creating the next generation of health care workers, we believe recruiting qualified immigrants is a complimentary and effective short-term approach to help alleviate the pressure. We need to recruit workers from other countries because we simply do not have enough people here to fill the staffing shortages. Hospitals work with

immigration offices, attorneys, and vendors to recruit international staff. The cost to recruit ranges from \$10,000 - \$20,000 per individual, depending on the country. Not all hospitals can afford this. We believe a state office of immigration and a forgivable loan program would make this process more efficient, accessible, and affordable for hospitals.

I do not have the magical answer to fill all these openings but passing this bill would be a step in the right direction. Please give the bill a **Do Pass** recommendation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be glad to answer any questions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tim Blasl, President
North Dakota Hospital Association

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

My name is Loren Myran. I am a retired farmer and rancher from Taylor, ND, I am in favor of SB 2151. The reason for my interest in this bill is because of the positive encounters my wife and I had with the relocation of refugees from Czechoslovakia and Romania. It was a fulfilling experience to help find a home for the families enroll the children in school, guide the parents in finding employment aligned to their previous occupations, assist with language barriers and cultural differences, and befriend them as new members in our community. This resulted in a lifetime bond and friendship that we continue to cherish today.

ND has around 30,000 unfilled employment opportunities. This bill would help provide financial support to immigrants who more than likely have given up their lifetime assets so they can get a new start in life in our country. Immigrants bring with them outstanding talent, skills, and education that can be used to enhance our state and fill our job markets. Most importantly they come here to work, even the hard labor and service jobs that are not being filled. When ND provides an avenue for immigrants to come to our state we both win. Our job markets get filled and the immigrants find a way to support their families and build a new life.

I am excited to hear that the ND Legislature is considering this bipartisan bill, that will provide opportunities for immigrants and the state of ND. When helping others you always receive more than you give.

Thank you for your time and consideration in supporting SB2151.

.

Megan Langley
280 102nd St. NW
Souris, ND 58783

Testimony of Megan Langley to the Senate Workforce Development Committee
Senate Bill 2151 January 26, 2023

Senator Wobbema and members of the Committee on Workforce Development,

My name is Megan Langley, and I am writing in support of Senate Bill 2151. I have worked across North Dakota, specializing in economic and community development with rural and remote communities, for nearly 10 years. As many of you know and live daily, workforce is a challenge for our small towns. North Dakota has over 320 communities, all originally built with substantial infrastructure, and many without the tax base to support it.

Since ND's statehood, it has been susceptible to population booms, due both to the original homesteading movement of the late 1800s, as well as the boom and bust economies of the oil and gas industry; however, since the early 2000s, ND's population has been on a quick and steady decline due to the loss of small family farms and long-standing outmigration of young people, creating the "Great Brain Drain of the Plains". This confluence of circumstances have led to drastic disparities in the quality of life and health outcomes of not only North Dakota's rural residents, but also its residents living in persistent poverty and within Tribal communities.

While North Dakota has made significant population gains over the last decade, partially because of the expanding energy sector and emerging tech sector of the i29 corridor, of nearly 100,000 residents, more newcomers are needed, especially in rural and remote spaces. Since 2013, North Dakota's rural communities have lost over 20% of their grocery stores and an increasing number of the remaining grocery stores are converting to nonprofit models in order to survive. Of North Dakota's counties, 38 of 53 are designated as frontier, meaning they have seven or less persons per square mile (US Census, 2018). In these remote areas, people are often categorized as living in a food desert. A rural food desert is an area where people must drive 10 miles or more to access a full-service grocery store (USDA). Further, individuals residing in North Dakota's food deserts often exhibit a higher incidence of obesity and diabetes, among a decreased ability to easily access medical facilities or services. Of North Dakota's 53 counties, 36 are fully classified as medically underserved areas; 13 are partially medically underserved areas; 2 are fully medically underserved populations; and 2 are adequately served.

SB 2151, along with the wraparound services provided by economic developers and community-based services, could mitigate the trend of growing rural disparities by innovating around North Dakota's pockets of opportunities. Without dollars and

legislation to draw newcomers to rural North Dakota, it may be difficult for existing rural community residents to support infrastructure and cultivate leadership.

It is my understanding that SB 2151 would incentivize 55 families to move to North Dakota and demonstrate that rural places are destinations for people seeking a good place to live, work, and raise their families. This bill could shepherd rural North Dakota into a new era of progress, including building toward equitable economic prosperity.

It is my understanding that several amendments to the bill have been proposed by William Patrie, including:

1. Changing the name *Immigration Workforce Advisory Board* to *Immigration Workforce Development Board*.
2. Adding Federal Agencies (line 12) to the list of organizations the Board will collaborate with.
3. Replacing “provide” with “contract for” legal services (line 17).
4. Targeting the funding in this bill to cities with populations of 10,000 or less.
5. Allowing the Immigration Development Board to continue to accept applications during the first biennium even if all appropriated funds are committed so the 2025 legislature could understand what demand exists.

I am supportive of the amendments being proposed.

Thank you again for this opportunity to share my testimony.

Draft: Testimony of Rev. Thomas Graner to the Senate Workforce Development Committee

Senate Bill 2151 January 26, 2023

Senator Wobbema and members of the Committee on Workforce Development

My name is Tom Graner. I am a life-long resident of North Dakota and a Catholic priest having served parishes in the north central part of the state since 1996 as a pastor and as rural life director for the Catholic Diocese of Fargo. I currently serve as pastor in Anamoose, Drake (District 6), and McClusky (District 14). I am also the president of the Board of Directors of CATCH, (Communities Acting Together for Change and Hope), a non-profit corporation registered with the North Dakota Secretary of State.

I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony in support of the Immigration Workforce Loan fund proposed for new residents of North Dakota in Senate Bill 2151.

At CATCH we have been discussing how we could involve rural communities in welcoming those who are in need of a new place to put down roots just as our families did 3 and 4 generations ago. In defining immigrant families as those who have lived in North Dakota for less than a year this bill opens the door for some of the North Dakota diaspora to return, Americans with no ties to North Dakota to establish themselves in our state, and those who have come here from beyond our nation's borders to follow in the footsteps of immigrant generations past.

I believe the assistance proposed in SB 2151 goes a long way to providing one of the missing links our communities would need to be successful in workforce development efforts – an incentive to choose to settle in North Dakota. Gone are the homestead acres that helped entice my ancestors to come here, but use of Legacy Fund dollars to support newcomers to North Dakota is a worthy cause. I believe this proposed assistance is the kind of American greatness and generosity (along the lines of the best of Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln) that make our nation a model for the world and our state a model for the nation.

I know the community groups I've spoken to on behalf of CATCH (ministerial associations and a Lions Club) are aware there are challenges to welcoming new residents. I also sense their desire for new neighbors, to extend a helping hand and express their welcoming hearts. I hope the availability of these funds will motivate those in the process of resettling to take advantage of the capacity found in our rural churches, schools, workforces and general populations and as in earlier generations build on those capacities for a more vital future for all of North Dakota.

Attracting and retaining new families and resources for our communities and workforce will take more than money, but the ideas in SB 2151 move the ball forward. I encourage you to boldly support this bill.

Thank you for making this discussion a reality.

Attachment: Membership application for CATCH.

Reasons to join CATCH

- CATCH encourages and believes in the capacity of small communities to become involved integrally and successfully in resettling those seeking a new home.
- CATCH provides individuals, communities, churches, and service organizations the information and support to overcome the challenges to being a welcoming community.
- CATCH supports the desire of refugees, asylees, and immigrants to establish roots in a new place.
- CATCH is an opportunity to provide a new generation the hope afforded our forebears.

- CATCH is a personal response in faith to uphold the justice due the orphan, widow, and immigrant (the least among us).
- CATCH enables rural communities to enhance cultural diversity and to add spice and variety to local life.
- CATCH rises to the spirit of Lady Liberty,
...Give me your tired, your poor, / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, / The wretched refuse of your teeming shore, / Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, / I lift my lamp beside the golden door!
 (Emma Lazarus)

CATCH Membership Application

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Will this phone receive texts?
Yes ____ No ____

What drives your interest in CATCH? _____

How do you see yourself being involved in CATCH activities? ____

What ways can CATCH serve you? _____

Is there anything else you would like CATCH to know? _____

Please return your completed membership application and dues to:

CATCH
c/o Patti Larson
PO Box 98
Sheyenne, ND 58374-0098

Suggested membership dues

\$100 – Individual
\$500 – Business or organization

Membership dues support the work of CATCH as described in this membership brochure.

CATCH Board of Directors

Rev. Deborah Blood, Conference Minister,
United Church of Christ, Fargo, ND

Warren Emmer, Chaplain, St. Andrew's Health
Center, Bottineau, ND

Tom Erdman, Mayor, Carrington, ND

Brad Gibbens, Acting Director, Center for Rural
Health, University of North Dakota School of
Medicine and Health Sciences, Grand Forks, ND

Rev. Tom Graner, Catholic Pastor, Anamoose,
Drake, and McClusky, ND - President

Patti Larson, rancher and entrepreneur,
Sheyenne, ND - Treasurer

Dawn Mandt, Executive Director, Red River
Regional Council, Grafton, ND

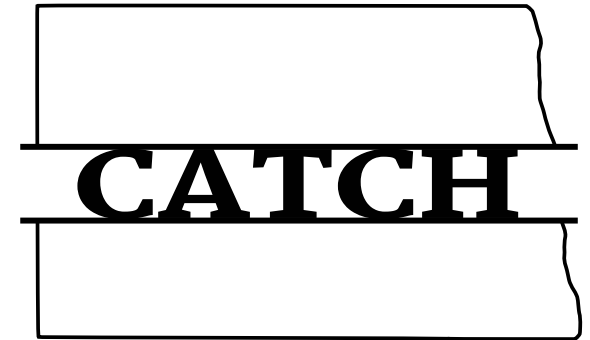
Bill Patrie, retired economic developer, Bismarck,
ND – Vice President

Hannah Vanorny, Circulation Manager, Bismarck
Public Library, Bismarck, ND - Secretary

CATCH is funded in part by a Creative
Community Solutions Grant from the Bush
Foundation.

CATCH is registered with the Secretary of State in
North Dakota as a non-profit organization.

CATCH is registered with the Secretary of State in
North Dakota as a fund raiser.



**Communities Acting Together
for Change and Hope**

Because North Dakota's
rural communities
make great homes!

Contact Info:
CATCH
c/o Rev. Tom Graner
PO Box 49
Anamoose, ND 58710-0049
catchnd.org

511 40th St S. Apt 218

Fargo ND 58103

January 25. 2023

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Workforce Development

SB 2287 Nursing Student loan forgiveness

20,000 overdrive years

Dear sir/madame

It is my hope that this letter will reach you in good health

Referring to the information above regarding SB 2287 Nursing Forgiveness Loan. Such an opportunity for student loan forgiveness would benefit me as a future nurse. I'm in the second quarter of my nursing program, the quarter has just begun, and I already owe 32,000 dollars. It would be greatly appreciated if you could help me so that I can start helping the hospitals in desperate need of nurses. Since I've been planning to buy a home in North Dakota rather than continuously paying rent and being a single mother of two children, this money will help me pay my tuition and help me become a nurse. Thank you very much in advance.

Sincerely yours

(Patricia Nyei)

Future Nurse

January 26, 2023

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development committee:

My name is Megan Carranza. I am a resident of Bismarck. I testify in support of Senate Bill 2151 to create a state Office of Immigration and an Immigration Workforce Advisory Board. I ask that you give this bill a Do Pass recommendation.

This bill will assist with North Dakota's workforce shortage in the short- and long-term because it incentivizes investing in our communities and rewards long-term settlement here.

My hometown—Crosby, ND—provides an example of how immigrant workforce has invigorated a small, some may say remote, town. Crosby's population is about 1000 people now and the nearest Target store is a two-hour drive away.

Since 2021, Crosby's 81-bed nursing home sits vacant. Staff shortages and high costs of paying traveling professionals contributed to the nursing home's closure. But now, Crosby's joint hospital and clinic employ at least seven immigrants who reliably fill full-time medical care positions. Two serve as registered nurses, one works in housekeeping, and Crosby's lab is fully staffed by four professionals from the Philippines. In addition, the school district employs a speech pathologist and math teacher from the Philippines. All of these individuals are more than employees—they also enrich the community through talents and contributions like coaching singing, raising families, joining churches, and making friendships.

Offering immigrants and refugees incentives to put down roots in North Dakota is good for the state and its newcomers' contributions. Often underemployed in terms of education and experience, this bill proposes a hand up to worthy homebuyers and entrepreneurs. All will gain from the return on this investment.

Immigrants, refugees, and their families have so positively impacted my life and communities that I recently took out my own \$100,000 loan to obtain a law degree to become an immigration lawyer. I believe encouraging migration into North Dakota is mutually beneficial now and well into our future. Let's keep open medical labs like Crosby's and fill positions across the state for the long-term.

Please give Senate Bill 2151 a Do Pass recommendation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully Submitted,

Megan Carranza, J.D.

Please Do Not Pass

I didn't see a definition for "immigrant". So when I read thru this bill this is what I see. I see ND picking up a \$10M tab for how many illegals that have been encourage to surge through our southern border these last 2 years? Everyone always wondered how they would all be provided for. And here it is. Ten million from ND. Maybe if you define immigrant, that wouldn't be the conclusion people would come to. Also, I remember the stories of my grandparents and my husbands grandparents coming to ND and MN as immigrants from Norway, Denmark, Germany, and Italy. They created wealth by working hard. We still do live in America where we all have that ability, if we choose to try. If we choose to work hard. Generations past have done just fine working hard to create their American Dream. They didn't need our taxpayer dollars to create another bureaucratic function. This administrative state is monster enough, it doesn't need to be bigger. Please invest this 10M in North Dakotans that want to become entrepreneurs. We have a lot of great young men and women that could do great things with this opportunity. You need to invest in the people that live here, not the ones that have been shipped her.

Thank you,

Testimony of Rev. Nicholas A. Scotten to the Senate Workforce Development Committee Senate Bill 2151

January 26, 2023

To the Honorable Senator Wobbema and members of the Committee on Workforce Development:

I write in OPPOSITION to SB2151. While it is a worthwhile goal to seek to make North Dakota a more desirable destination, yet this is the wrong way to do it, for the following reasons:

1. Why are immigrants seen as so valuable to bring to the state—at the tune of basically paying them \$160,000 over ten years to move here? They get money for just going to college, or just holding down a job, or just opening a business in the state? No, the market will level out over time. Businesses will need to pay a living wage in order to attract workers, and the extra businesses pay in wages will bring people to the state.
2. This is nothing against immigrants per se, but I see nothing in the legislation that determines whether they have come legally to the country. Certainly, no citizen's money should be going to reward those who come illegally. However, whichever way immigrants come, why are those from outside the country going to get \$16,000 a year just given to them for acting as new normal residents of ND by those who are already citizens of this state/country? Why are immigrants so valuable that they are more important than those who are already citizens of the country, such as our own children, whom we would like to keep in the state and citizens of other states we might want to attract, such that we have to pay immigrants to come?
3. If this bill would become a law, what are the safeguards to make sure that the "right" people get this money? And who decides who the "right" people are? And again, why are they more "right" to get the money than perhaps recruiting workers from those who are already citizens of other states, or just our own children, incentivizing them to remain in the state?
4. If money is ever given like this, I would suggest that it fund rural medical doctors and other crucially missing skilled practitioners—certainly not just for 55 families with no discernible special skills or qualifications that makes this kind of outlay of money remotely feasible and worthwhile.
5. As it stands now, please vote NO to the bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Dr. Nicholas A. Scotten
Elim Evangelical Free Church
1141 9th St. SW
Valley City, ND



January 26, 2023



Office Address:
2700 State Street
Suite F2
Bismarck, ND 58503

Contact number:
303.241.1193
Email:
bismarckglobalneighbors@gmail.com

**Testimony of Julie N Ramos Lagos in support of Senate Bill 2151
to the Senate Workforce Development Committee**

To Senator Wobbema and members of the Committee on Workforce Development

I would like to submit this letter in support of Senate Bill 2151. My name is Julie N Ramos Lagos, currently the Executive Director for Bismarck Global Neighbors, a local non-profit that provides Refugee Support Services and programs that encourage successful integration of New Americans to Bismarck and Western ND. Just in the last six months, our organization has helped more than 100 refugees or humanitarian parolees new to ND settle into the Bismarck region and across Western ND. I am also an adjunct faculty at the University of Mary in Cultural Anthropology.

I am also originally from the small town of Tioga, ND and during the last oil boom in the Bakken, I was City Administrator for Tioga. It was during that time, that I saw the overall population increase 3x times within a year and our small town held 33% of all sales tax in ND during that time. Many small towns in the Bakken region saw rapid growth in infrastructure, workforce, housing, and educational initiatives at that time. Now many of those same towns have many empty housing units, finding barriers for childcare options, and a desperate need for employees. Many businesses have closed down for lack of staffing. Just a few months ago, the medical community in Tioga reached out to me to ask how they could bring refugees or international workers to their community to support their lack of nursing staff. This is only one of many small towns in ND that have reached out to me asking for assistance in this matter and wanting to be educated on the ways to bring New Americans to their small towns. Just in Bismarck alone, we know that Sanford has recently hired over 200 international nurses and St. A's over 400 international nurses to help their nursing workforce deficits. Many of your small towns across ND have

same concerns but do not always have the resources like your urban locations do and find additional assistance is needed for the New Americans coming to their communities.

I can tell you numerous success stories of New Americans that have come to ND this past year and are now vital to our economic growth and workforce. One family from Afghanistan that we helped to resettle this past summer recently had a baby, the husband is working in the HR department for Sanford and the mom is preparing to become a pilot for our community after maternity leave as she was the first woman pilot in her tribe in Afghanistan. There are also several New Americans that just completed their CDL trainings and are now supporting the trucking industry in ND. Others are supporting the workforce in childcare, nursing, manufacturing, farming, education, and more. These include both urban and rural areas in ND.

I have helped refugees or parolees resettle this past year in rural towns like Stanley, Wilton, Carrington, Burlington, and urban areas such as Dickinson, Minot, and Williston and many are supporting the workforce in those diverse communities.

As an affiliate of LIRS and holding contracts with the refugee state department to provide support to refugees in ND, I have found that it is also essential to have support from private businesses and organizations, churches, and schools along with state agencies in order to provide successful integration for a New American into a community. SB 2151 shifts some of the responsibility for recruiting workers to North Dakota from State Agencies and private businesses to communities. Especially in small towns where you have lack of resources for food pantries, English classes, transportation, childcare, and more. Transportation alone is a big challenge for New Americans who are not used to our harsh winters. New refugees often have no credit history due to getting their social security for the first time making it often difficult to get loans for mortgages or vehicles which can be a necessity for the workforce. SB 2151 can support the efforts of communities and individuals who need that funding during the first year to support their families. Majority of refugees currently coming to ND have family ties and individuals that have had that local support and are now bringing their families and friends to ND.

I believe SB2151 can be a part of the workforce solution for rural communities and can have a big impact on our state economy into the future. In the Bakken over the years, I have seen many individuals take early retirement and often you do not see the same growth of individuals under 35 in those communities who stay for the long term as many move to urban areas like Bismarck. This has caused many communities in ND to lack essential workers. Canada, our neighbor to the north experienced much of the same recently and took action this past year in bringing in over 430K of immigrants to their country in 2022 and plan to bring 1.5 million by 2025. They are seeing significant entrepreneurial and workforce growth in their communities due to this and ND has an opportunity to help bring similar successes with this bill.



FMWF Chamber Letter of Support for SB 2151

Chair Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

For the record, my name is Shannon Full, and I have the pleasure of serving as the President and CEO of the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo (FMWF) Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's mission is to be a catalyst for economic growth and prosperity for businesses, members, and the greater community. On behalf of our over 1,900 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 2151, with the amendment offered by Senator Mathern.

First, I would like to take a moment to recognize and thank legislative leadership for their forethought on the importance of this committee. Given the gravity of the workforce challenges our businesses are facing, the business community is very thankful for the creation of this standing legislative committee to help address some of those challenges. Additionally, I would like to offer my thanks to Senator Tim Mathern for his leadership and dedication to this issue.

As you know, every state across the United States is competing to attract, develop, and retain workforce, hoping to fill thousands of open jobs. According to the latest federal Job Openings and Labor Report, the national average was nearly 1.9 job openings per available worker. In December of 2022, a U.S. Chamber study categorized North Dakota in the “most severe” workforce shortage category with 2.2 job openings per available worker. These statistics go to show that much of this workforce shortage is a numbers issue, we simply do not have enough capable individuals to fill the number of open jobs. Our state must effectively compete on a global scale for workforce to fill our thousands of open jobs. To do this, both the public and private sectors must work together to identify creative, innovative and multi-pronged solutions. We believe legal immigration and refugee resettlement are pivotal to addressing this crisis and are one of the prongs that are a part of a comprehensive solution.

Many of our business and industry leaders throughout our region have shared their desire to look beyond our nation's borders to fill their open jobs but are all too often faced with several challenges. For example, many businesses do not have immigration experts on staff nor do they have access to the necessary information, resources, and legal services in their communities to assist in the hiring of immigrants or refugees. Due to this lack of resources, The FMWF Chamber and many other organizations throughout the state of North Dakota have asked for the establishment of an Office of Immigration to provide businesses with the much-needed resources to attract, retain, and develop talent from across the globe. It is critical that these services be strategically placed to ensure accessibility in regions with high workforce needs.

Additionally, I must emphasize the importance of not only the attraction of workforce but also the retention and development of these individuals. When these individuals move to North Dakota we must also focus our attention on retention strategies, to ensure these folks are properly acclimated and become well-rooted in our communities. As it relates to development, many of these individuals from outside the US possess a number of skills or a strong desire to develop a new set of skills.

Whether it be through post-secondary, credentialing, or on-the-job training, we must ensure we are equipping these individuals with skills to best prepare them for their future careers.

Lastly, as the legislature considers the establishment of this office, we recognize the importance of public-private partnerships when addressing this crisis. We are in full support of the expansion or inclusion of parameters to ensure both the employee and employer are obligated to the successful attraction, development, and retention of individuals. This obligation would ensure any funds are being expended strategically and judiciously, while preserving the integrity and sustainability of these programs for the future.

The workforce crisis our country is facing is complex and cannot be solved unilaterally. It is cyclical in nature and requires a great deal of creativity and innovation. Our state has the opportunity to lead the nation by establishing a strategic path forward that addresses the challenges faced by businesses and communities, as it relates to immigration and refugee resettlement. On behalf of our members, I would like to thank the committee for their time and consideration this morning. I will now stand for any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shannon Full". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Shannon" and the last name "Full" clearly distinguishable.

Shannon Full
President/CEO
FMWF Chamber of Commerce
sfull@fmwfchamber.com

Senator Wobbema and members of the Committee on Workforce Development

I write to you in favor of SB 2151. I am the Director of Human Resources for Coffee Cup Travel Plazas. We are a family-owned business with a location in Steele ND. Our business has been part of that community for 40 years. We understand that the strength of our business lies in the people and community of Steele. We support opportunities to bring growth to rural communities like Steele.

My professional career has been in Human Resources, specifically team development. For 7 years I worked with Target Corporation in Minnesota. I had the pleasure to work with a diverse workforce that included a large community of immigrant families. My hope is that my testimony can provide insight into the positive impact welcoming new families to a community and workforce has.

With incentives in place to attract these new families to Minnesota, their arrival relieved significant workforce shortages. These families were energized by the opportunity to start a new life, in a safe place, with a home and a job. Often entire families would interview and be hired at the same store. They brought a feeling of pride in their new country, willingness to work hard and strong family connections to these locations.

There was a culture of learning, of sharing language, traditions, and food. Team members embraced these new coworkers who were fast learners and hard workers. A mutual respect was built on their shared experiences at work. The strength of those relationships spilled over into their communities as these new families established roots with stable employment and children in school.

North Dakota is experiencing a workforce shortage. Each year it becomes more difficult to recruit new team members to our location in Steele. As an organization we have taken the step of providing company housing for our team members in the hopes that it will make relocation to Steele possible for interested candidates. Even with housing in place, we continue to struggle to attract new families to North Dakota. In our business, this can mean reduced service hours which impacts our ability to fully serve our communities and guests.

There is no doubt North Dakota communities and businesses would benefit from more families choosing to make places like Steele a safe, welcoming place to start their new life. We have jobs for them and rural communities are ready to welcome them.

Please give the bill a Do Pass recommendation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

January 26th, 2023

From: Gabriela Balf, MD, MPH

Re: In Support of SB 2151

Dear Chairman Wobbema, esteemed Committee Members,

We are two immigrants, proud to be working in North Dakota and contributing to the well-being of our state as physicians.

We were welcomed in America and helped with various bank loans for a car, house, etc, when we had nothing, we came with two suitcases and our MD diplomas.

We have worked for 25 years in this country, last 10 in ND.

In plain money talk, in 2021 alone, we paid around \$220,000 for federal taxes and around \$20,000 for ND state taxes.

We very happy to see the bill 2151 introduced to help people like us.

Thank you for investing your trust in us,

Gabriela Balf, MD, MPH

Dragos Balf, MD

*The Manual of International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-11) eliminates the term "transsexualism" and replaces it with the term "Gender Incongruence " (GI)⁹. This new terminology will no longer be part of the chapter on mental disorders (chapter 6) but a new chapter is created (chapter 17) called "conditions related to sexual health".

January 26, 2023

Senate Workforce Committee

Chairman Wobbema and Committee members,

To simplify your understanding of this bill I will summarize it in 6 words; We Need Them, They Need Us.

I am Tim Mathern, a senator from Fargo. Fargo has been the beneficiary of immigrants building our workforce. It is time the whole state benefits from the workforce available in the world.

From local businesses and appropriations committee hearings, I hear daily of our workforce shortage and the drain on our economy when we have potentially up to 50,000 unfilled positions. Governor Burgum noted this too in his state of the state address.

When we are short of workers, people do not get the services they need, our towns and communities dwindle, our churches and schools empty, our infrastructure doesn't get built in time to escape higher costs, and our business profits stall.

This bill is needed to get legal immigrants into North Dakota, and to get persons vetted to fill the actual job openings in North Dakota. This bill is an old idea coming back to life. In the early 1900s when we were looking for people to farm the land we had an Office of Immigration to address that need. Today we are looking for people to work in our businesses and healthcare organizations. It is for these reasons I introduced SB 2151.

The bill does two things, 1. Establish an office of immigration and 2. Establish an immigration Workforce Loan program.

The appropriation of \$10,000,000 is enough to be prudent in developing a proof of concept and developing a method to fund it in future legislative sessions.

Section 1 establishes the duties and fees of the Immigration office within the Bank of North Dakota. Why the Bank of North Dakota? The Bank has a history of carrying out major public policy initiatives impacting our citizens; examples are student loans, beginning farmers, and loans to our local government units while we wait for federal dollars coming to address a disaster. I believe the Department of Commerce is another option but starting out with the Bank has a broader appeal to our citizens. However, I have amendments to permit the Bank to have Commerce to carry out program aspects. The Bank would establish a board of related entity leaders and determine workforce loan eligibility criteria. The loan amount is capped at \$160,000 and is an "up to" amount. If the Bank issued a loan at the maximum amount of \$160

thousand the bill would help about 60 families, if it decided to give only enough for a house down payment of about \$40 thousand there would be enough for 240 families.

You might ask why the number \$160,000. This amount makes a connection with the Homestead program which brought people to North Dakota by providing 160 acres of free land. 160 acres, 160 thousand dollars is a way to connect to the heritage of many of us now living in North Dakota. Certainly, another amount could be chosen. Also, this is a loan, not a gift, though there is a provision so loans could be forgiven in increments of the length of time the family stayed in North Dakota. This is to address a key challenge; how do we keep people here? The goal is to have time-related incentives to stay, friends to get established, children to be born and go to school, fall in love here, and get accustomed to the climate. These are factors in families deciding to stay in North Dakota.

Sections 2 and 3 fund the appropriation from the Legacy Earnings Fund. I think this fits well as the consequence of the program will have generations of payback as families establish themselves here.

Members of the Committee, this bill is just one ingredient to address our workforce shortage going forward. I encourage you to give due consideration to the many persons who have contacted me about the details. I have no doubt that this bill needs further amendments, and I offer some that I developed with key players including Bank and Commerce staff. I am hopeful that your committee will adopt these amendments. See attached Christmas tree version.

I ask for a Do Pass recommendation on SB2151 and a referral to the Appropriations Committee. I am ready to address your questions, but I also want to leave time to hear what others have to say to you.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Senator Tim Mathern

SENATE BILL NO. 2151

Introduced by

Senators Mathern, Davison, Hogue

Representatives Dakane, Lefor, Nathe

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new chapter to title 6 of the North Dakota Century Code,
2 relating to the creation of an office of immigration and the immigration workforce loan program;
3 to provide a transfer; to provide an appropriation; and to provide for a report.

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

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

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

8 There is created an office of immigration within the Bank of North Dakota. The office of
9 immigration reports to the immigration workforce advisory development board, administers the
10 immigration workforce loan program, and promotes immigration to encourage resettlement of
11 refugees and immigrants in the state. The office of immigration shall:

- 12 1. Collaborate with private sector businesses and nonprofit organizations to market and
13 promote North Dakota as a destination for immigrant and refugee families in an effort
14 to address workforce challenges and needs in the state. To ensure services required
15 under this section are available, the office of immigration may enter memorandums of
16 understanding with a state agency or contract with a nonprofit organization with
17 expertise in providing immigration assistance services.
- 18 2. Advise North Dakota businesses and communities on immigration policy and assist
19 with recruitment of immigrant workers.
- 20 3. Provide legal assistance education to immigrant families, businesses, and communities
21 regarding federal and state immigration requirements.
- 22 4. Develop guidelines and procedures for a fee system to be assessed to each business
23 benefiting from employment of immigrant workers as a result of the immigration
24 workforce loan program to offset administrative costs of the office of immigration. The

1 office of immigration shall begin assessment of immigration placement fees on July 1,
2 2025. Revenue collected from immigration placement fees and any interest earned on
3 these moneys must be deposited in a Bank of North Dakota operating fund for the
4 benefit of the office of immigration, subject to legislative appropriation.

5 **Immigration workforce ~~advisory~~development board - Membership - Meetings.**

6 1. The immigration workforce ~~advisory~~development board consists of:

- 7 a. The president of the Bank of North Dakota or the president's designee who shall
8 serve as the chairperson of the board;
9 b. The commissioner of the department of commerce or the commissioner's
10 designee;
11 c. The executive director of the department of health and human services or the
12 executive director's designee;
13 d. The ~~state health officer or the state health officer's designee~~executive director of
14 job service North Dakota; and
15 e. The commissioner of the department of labor and human rights;
16 f. An individual from a North Dakota labor union appointed by the governor to serve
17 a two-year term beginning July 1 of each odd-numbered year;
18 g. An individual from a North Dakota organization that promotes North Dakota
19 businesses and is dedicated to improving the state's workforce appointed by the
20 governor to serve a two-year term beginning July 1 of each odd-numbered year;
21 and
22 h. An individual from a private nonprofit organization promoting rural development
23 appointed by the governor to serve a two-year term beginning July 1 of each odd-
24 numbered year.

25 2. The board shall meet as necessary to review loan applications, approve the issuance
26 of loans, and review and approve the activities of the office of immigration.

27 **Immigration workforce loan program - Eligibility.**

28 1. The office of immigration shall administer the immigration workforce loan program and,
29 subject to approval from the immigration workforce ~~advisory~~development board, issue
30 immigration workforce loans to eligible individuals or families who have been residents
31 of the state for less than ~~one year~~three months. As used in this chapter, "family"

1 means a group of two or more individuals related by birth, marriage, or adoption who
2 reside together in North Dakota. The office may not issue new loans after June 30,
3 2029.

4 2. An eligible individual or family may receive a loan of up to one hundred sixty thousand
5 dollars for a term not to exceed ten years. Eligible uses of loan proceeds include costs
6 related to housing, transportation, food, health care, child care, the pursuit of career
7 development or technical skills identified as being in high demand in North Dakota,
8 and startup costs for a locally owned business.

9 a. Preference for loans will be given to immigrant individuals that can provide proof
10 of employment by a North Dakota-based business.

11 b. The amount of each loan provided is at the discretion of the office of immigration
12 based on need. The decisions of the office of immigration are considered final.

13 c. An immigrant individual or family is eligible for one loan through the immigration
14 workforce loan program.

15 Immigration workforce loan program - Interest rate and forgiveness.

16 1. The principal balance of the an immigration workforce loan must be forgiven by ten
17 percent each year if the individual or each adult in the family, during the year being
18 considered for loan forgiveness, has:

19 a. Been gainfully employed in North Dakota;

20 b. Established a business and is actively operating the business in North Dakota; ~~or~~

21 c. Children attending a North Dakota school on a full-time basis; or

22 d. Completed two semesters of postsecondary education as a full-time student at a
23 North Dakota institution.

24 ~~3.2.~~ An individual or family shall make monthly interest payments on the outstanding loan
25 balance based on the following interest rate schedule:

26 a. Zero percent for the first three years of the loan;

27 b. Two percent for the next two years of the loan; and

28 c. Equal to a standard Bank of North Dakota loan rate for all subsequent years.

29 ~~4.3.~~ The office of immigration shall establish the application process and additional
30 eligibility requirements for the immigration workforce loan program, subject to approval
31 from the immigration workforce ~~advisory~~ development board.

1 **Immigration workforce loan fund.**

2 The immigration workforce loan fund is a special fund in the state treasury and must be
3 administered by the Bank of North Dakota. Moneys in the fund are available for providing
4 immigration workforce loans and defraying administrative expenses of the immigration
5 workforce loan program, subject to legislative appropriations. Interest earned on moneys in the
6 fund must be credited to the fund.

7 **SECTION 2. TRANSFER - LEGACY EARNINGS FUND TO IMMIGRATION WORKFORCE**
8 **LOAN FUND.** The office of management and budget shall transfer \$10,000,000 from the legacy
9 earnings fund to the immigration workforce loan fund during the biennium beginning July 1,
10 2023, and ending June 30, 2025.

11 **SECTION 3. APPROPRIATION - BANK OF NORTH DAKOTA - IMMIGRATION**
12 **WORKFORCE LOAN PROGRAM - FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT POSITION - REPORT TO**
13 **SIXTY-NINTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY - ONE-TIME FUNDING.** There is appropriated out of
14 any moneys in the immigration workforce loan fund in the state treasury, not otherwise
15 appropriated, the sum of \$10,000,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the Bank
16 of North Dakota, of which ~~\$8,800,000~~\$9,000,000 is for the purpose of issuing immigration
17 workforce loans and ~~\$1,200,000~~\$1,000,000 is for the purpose of defraying administrative
18 expenses of the immigration workforce loan program for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023,
19 and ending June 30, 2025. The Bank of North Dakota is authorized one full-time equivalent
20 position to administer the program. The Bank of North Dakota shall report to the sixty-ninth
21 legislative assembly regarding the number and amount of immigration workforce loans issued
22 during the 2023-25 biennium.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL NO. 2151

Page 1, line 9, replace "advisory" with "development"

Page 1, line 13, remove "and refugee"

Page 1, line 14, after the underscored period insert "To ensure services required under this section are available, the office of immigration may enter memorandums of understanding with a state agency or contract with a nonprofit organization with expertise in providing immigration assistance services."

Page 1, line 15, after "businesses" insert "and communities"

Page 1, line 17, replace "legal assistance" with "education"

Page 1, line 17, after "families" insert ", businesses, and communities"

Page 2, line 3, replace "advisory" with "development"

Page 2, line 4, replace "advisory" with "development"

Page 2, line 11, replace "state health officer or the state health officer's designee" with "executive director of job service North Dakota"

Page 2, line 19, after "organization" insert "promoting rural development"

Page 2, line 25, replace "advisory" with "development"

Page 2, line 27, replace "one year" with "three months"

Page 2, line 31, after the underscored period insert "Eligible uses of loan proceeds include costs related to housing, transportation, food, health care, child care, the pursuit of career development or technical skills identified as being in high demand in North Dakota, and startup costs for a locally owned business."

- a. Preference for loans will be given to immigrant individuals that can provide proof of employment by a North Dakota-based business.
- b. The amount of each loan provided is at the discretion of the office of immigration based on need. The decisions of the office of immigration are considered final.
- c. An immigrant individual or family is eligible for one loan through the immigration workforce loan program.

Immigration workforce loan program - Interest rate and forgiveness.

1."

Page 2, line 31, replace "the" with "an immigration workforce"

Page 3, line 4, remove "or"

Page 3, line 5, after "c." insert "Children attending a North Dakota school on a full-time basis; or"

d."

Page 3, line 7, replace "3." with "2."

Page 3, line 12, replace "4." with "3."

Page 3, line 14, replace "advisory" with "development"

Page 3, line 30, replace "\$8,800,000" with "\$9,000,000"

Page 3, line 31, replace "\$1,200,000" with "\$1,000,000"

Renumber accordingly

January 26, 2023
Senate Workforce Committee
Chairman Wobbema and Committee Members.
I am Hamida Dakane house representative from Fargo.

I support Senate Bill 2151.

One of the biggest long-term challenges for North Dakota has been and will continue to be issues around workforce. At its core this bill supports the expansion of the North Dakota workforce while also creating a more dynamic, innovative, and entrepreneurial economy.

This bill will help to attract and retain immigrant entrepreneurs in the state, which would in turn lead to an increase in economic activity. Immigrant entrepreneurs often bring new ideas and diverse perspectives to the business community, which can lead to innovation and job creation. Additionally, immigrant-owned businesses can often serve as a bridge to other markets, helping to expand trade and investment opportunities for the state. Expanded trade relations in North Dakota means more demand for North Dakota products while also meeting the workforce needs of the state.

This bill will help to address skills shortages in certain industries in North Dakota. Immigrants often have specialized skills and expertise in areas such as technology, engineering, and healthcare, which are in high demand in the state. By providing loan assistance to immigrant entrepreneurs, the state will retain and attract these skilled workers, which would in turn lead to an increase in productivity and economic growth.

This bill helps fit a niche that isn't being filled in the market currently. The program has an end date that is just long enough to show the market the potential of this niche, and then traditional lenders and market forces can take over to provide the service at that point. As a result, this bill create more inclusive and diverse communities. Immigrants often face barriers to accessing traditional forms of financing, such as lack of credit history or difficulty in obtaining collateral. By providing loan assistance specifically to immigrant entrepreneurs, the state can help to level the playing field and ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to start and grow a business. This would not only help to create more opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs, but also promote greater economic and social inclusion. Those benefits expand well beyond the immigrant communities, as the private sector sees this programs success, even before its end date, we will likely see similar private programs put in placed or strengthened for all North Dakotans.

Please join me in supporting Senate Bill 2151 to improve our economy, reduce our workforce challenges, and make North Dakota the place in the United States that is known for supporting entrepreneurs in build their companies.

23.0091.05004
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for
the Senate Workforce Development
Committee

January 30, 2023

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL NO. 2151

Page 1, line 9, replace "advisory" with "development"

Page 1, line 10, remove "encourage resettlement of refugees and"

Page 1, line 11, replace "immigrants in the state" with "the state to attract immigrants with the skills and experience necessary to fill high-demand positions"

Page 1, line 13, remove "and refugee"

Page 1, line 14, after the underscored period insert "To ensure services required under this section are available, the office of immigration may enter memorandums of understanding with a state agency or contract with a nonprofit organization with expertise in providing immigration assistance services."

Page 1, line 15, after "businesses" insert "and communities"

Page 1, line 17, replace "legal assistance" with "education"

Page 1, line 17, after "families" insert ", businesses, and communities"

Page 2, line 3, replace "**advisory**" with "**development**"

Page 2, line 4, replace "advisory" with "development"

Page 2, line 11, replace "state health officer or the state health officer's designee" with "executive director of job service North Dakota"

Page 2, line 19, after "organization" insert "promoting rural development"

Page 2, line 25, replace "advisory" with "development"

Page 2, line 27, replace "one year" with "three months"

Page 2, line 31, after the underscored period insert "Eligible uses of loan proceeds include costs related to housing, transportation, food, health care, child care, training to improve existing career development or technical skills, and startup costs for a locally owned business that employs positions in high demand."

- a. Preference for loans will be given to immigrant individuals that can provide proof of full-time employment by a North Dakota-based business in a high-demand position.
- b. The amount of each loan provided is at the discretion of the office of immigration based primarily on the workforce needs of the position and secondarily on the needs of the immigrant that can fill the position. The decisions of the office of immigration are considered final.
- c. An immigrant individual or family is eligible for one loan through the immigration workforce loan program.

Immigration workforce loan program - Interest rate and forgiveness.

1."

Page 2, line 31, replace "the" with "an immigration workforce"

Page 3, line 1, replace the second "each" with "at least one"

Page 3, line 3, after "employed" insert "on a full-time basis in a high-demand position"

Page 3, line 3, after the underscored semicolon insert "or"

Page 3, line 4, after the first "business" insert "employing positions in high demand"

Page 3, line 4, remove "; or"

Page 3, remove line 5

Page 3, line 6, remove "North Dakota institution"

Page 3, line 7, replace "3." with "2."

Page 3, line 12, replace "4." with "3."

Page 3, line 14, replace "advisory" with "development"

Page 3, line 30, replace "\$8,800,000" with "\$9,000,000"

Page 3, line 31, replace "\$1,200,000" with "\$1,000,000"

Renumber accordingly

23.0680.01002

Sixty-eighth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

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 health care immigration~~ a division of
3 immigration assistance; to amend and reenact section 54-60-02 of the North Dakota Century
4 Code, relating to divisions of the department of commerce; to provide an appropriation; and to
5 provide for a report.

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

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

9 ~~— Office of health care immigration — Duties — Fees.~~

10 ~~— There is created an office of health care immigration within the department of commerce.~~

11 ~~Employees of the office of health care immigration report to the commissioner and shall:~~

12 ~~— 1. Coordinate and expedite the immigration process and placement of international~~
13 ~~health care workers immigrating to North Dakota for employment in health care~~
14 ~~facilities.~~

15 ~~— 2. Support recently immigrated individuals working in a health care facility by assisting~~
16 ~~with any financial, legal, housing, or other immigration-related applications, forms, or~~
17 ~~communications necessary to provide for successful immigration to the state.~~

18 ~~— 3. Collaborate with health care facilities to establish a system to assist immigrants with~~
19 ~~accessing basic housing, food, and other essential services necessary to provide for~~
20 ~~successful immigration to the state.~~

21 ~~— 4. Create a communication system among health care immigrated and other immigrated~~
22 ~~individuals to provide a network for immigrants to share community resources and~~
23 ~~provide immigration process assistance.~~

- 1 ~~5. Provide outreach services to current and potential health care immigrants to~~
2 ~~encourage additional individuals to immigrate to North Dakota for employment in~~
3 ~~health care facilities.~~
- 4 ~~6. Develop guidelines and procedures for a fee system to be assessed to each business~~
5 ~~benefiting from employment of immigrant workers as a result of assistance provided~~
6 ~~by the office of health care immigration to offset administrative costs of the office of~~
7 ~~health care immigration by July 1, 2025. Revenue collected from health care~~
8 ~~immigration assistance fees and any interest earned on these moneys must be~~
9 ~~deposited in the economic development fund for the benefit of the office of health care~~
10 ~~immigration, subject to legislative appropriations.~~

11 **Division of immigration assistance**

12 There is created a division of immigration assistance in the department of commerce. The
13 division of immigration assistance shall assist:

- 14 1. Individuals residing in North Dakota that recently immigrated to the state and
15 individuals considering immigrating to the state for work or education related
16 purposes; and
- 17 2. North Dakota businesses attempting to attract and retain immigrant workers.

18 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 54-60-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is
19 amended and reenacted as follows:

20 **54-60-02. Department of commerce - Divisions.**

21 The North Dakota department of commerce is created.

- 22 1. The department must consist of:
- 23 a. A division of community services;
- 24 b. A division of economic development and finance;
- 25 c. A division of tourism;
- 26 d. A division of workforce development;
- 27 e. A division of immigration assistance; and
- 28 e.f. Any division or office the commissioner determines necessary to carry out this
- 29 chapter.
- 30 2. The commissioner shall appoint the director of each division of the department. Each
- 31 director appointed by the commissioner serves at the pleasure of the commissioner

1 and is entitled to receive a salary set by the commissioner within the limits of
2 legislative appropriations.

3 **SECTION 3. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE - OFFICE OF HEALTH-**
4 **CARE-IMMIGRATION DIVISION OF IMMIGRATION ASSISTANCE OPERATIONS -**
5 **FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT POSITIONS -- REPORT TO SIXTY-NINTH LEGISLATIVE-**
6 **ASSEMBLY -- ONE-TIME FUNDING.** There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general
7 fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of ~~\$536,257~~, or so much of the
8 sum as may be necessary, and out of any moneys in the economic development fund in the
9 state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of ~~\$536,257~~ \$2,036,541, or so much of the
10 sum as may be necessary, to the department of commerce, of which \$1,036,541 is for the
11 purpose of providing salaries and benefits for ~~office of health care immigration~~ division of
12 immigration assistance staff and \$1,000,000 is for the purpose of contracting with a third-party
13 vendor to assist the division of immigration assistance with services required in section 1 of this
14 Act, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2025. The department of
15 commerce is authorized five full-time equivalent positions to administer the ~~office of health care~~
16 ~~immigration, including one attorney, one administrative assistant, and three nurse positions.~~ The
17 ~~department of commerce shall report to the sixty-ninth legislative assembly regarding the~~
18 ~~number of health care immigrants and health care facilities assisted through the office of health~~
19 ~~care immigration during the 2023-25 biennium. The \$536,257 appropriation from the general~~
20 ~~fund in this section is considered a one-time funding item~~ division of immigration assistance.

21 **SECTION 4. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE - IMMIGRATION**
22 **ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM - MATCHING FUNDS REQUIREMENT - REPORT TO**
23 **SIXTY-NINTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.** There is appropriated out of any moneys in the
24 general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$5,000,000, or so
25 much of the sum as may be necessary, to the department of commerce for the purpose of
26 providing grants to North Dakota businesses to attract and retain immigrant workers, for the
27 biennium beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2025. The department of commerce may
28 spend the funds appropriated in this section only to the extent the organization has secured
29 matching funds from nonstate sources on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The department of commerce
30 shall report to the sixty-ninth legislative assembly regarding the number of North Dakota

Sixty-eighth
Legislative Assembly

- 1 businesses assisted and number of workers added as a result of grants provided by the division
- 2 of immigrant assistance during the 2023-25 biennium.

February 1, 2023

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL NO. 2142

Page 1, line 2, remove "health care"

Page 1, line 7, remove "**health care** "

Page 1, line 8, remove "health care"

Page 1, line 9, remove "health care"

Page 1, line 11, remove "health care"

Page 1, line 11, remove "in health care"

Page 1, line 12, remove "facilities"

Page 1, line 13, remove "working in a health care facility"

Page 1, line 16, replace "health care facilities" with "employers"

Page 1, line 19, remove "health care immigrated and other"

Page 1, line 22, remove "health care"

Page 1, line 23, remove "in"

Page 1, line 24, remove "health care facilities"

Page 2, line 3, remove "health care"

Page 2, line 4, remove "health care"

Page 2, line 4, remove "health care"

Page 2, line 6, remove "health care"

Page 2, line 9, remove "**HEALTH CARE** "

Page 2, line 11, replace "\$536,257" with "\$242,500"

Page 2, line 13, replace "\$536,257" with "\$242,500"

Page 2, line 15, remove "health care"

Page 2, line 16, replace "five" with "one"

Page 2, line 17, replace "positions" with "position"

Page 2, line 17, remove "health care"

Page 2, line 17, remove ", including one attorney, one"

Page 2, line 18, remove "administrative assistant, and three nurse positions"

Page 2, line 19, remove "health care"

Page 2, line 19, remove the second "health"

Page 2, line 20, replace "care facilities" with "employers"

Page 2, line 20, remove "health care"

Page 2, line 21, replace "\$536,257" with "\$242,500"

Page 2, after line 22, insert:

"SECTION 3. LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT STUDY - IMMIGRATION - BUDGET SECTION REPORT - REPORT TO SIXTY-NINTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. During the 2023-2024 interim, the legislative management shall study the immigration needs in the state. The study must include input from the department of commerce regarding the implementation of the office of immigration, the number of immigrants assisted, efficiencies gained in helping immigrant individuals with the immigration process, collaborative efforts with businesses, the status of the immigration communication system, the status of developing a fee system to defray the administrative costs of the office, and other immigration needs in the state. The study must be completed by July 1, 2024. The interim committee assigned the responsibility for this study shall provide a recommendation regarding the current and future immigration needs of the state and the role of the office of immigration to the budget section. The legislative management shall report its findings and recommendations, together with any legislation required to implement the recommendations, to the sixty-ninth legislative assembly."

Renumber accordingly