

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF MAYORS

April 30, 2023

To: Members of the Jobs, Economic Development, Labor, and Industry Conference Committee

Re: Support for House Position on "Southwestern Minnesota Workforce Development Scholarship Pilot Program"

Dear Senators and Representatives,

Thank you all for serving on this critically important committee. As Mayors in communities across southwest Minnesota, we believe the most significant and pressing issue that continues to affect our communities is the workforce shortage in critical, high demand technical trades career fields.

We respectfully ask for your support of the House policy provisions in the Economic Development Policy Article 3, Section 25, page R56 – R59 and the accompanying \$700,000 appropriation on page R-40 of Article 1.

Collectively we have concentrated on addressing the vacuum we all feel from our young future workforce leaving for adjacent states to take advantage of their workforce development programs. These young adults leave our communities to go to school for free in South Dakota, finish their technical trade programs, fulfill their contractual labor agreement with their workforce business sponsor, purchase a home in South Dakota and never return to our communities to fill our critical workforce shortages.

The House provision referenced above is a concept three years in the making. It reflects a wide variety of stakeholders coming together to create a pilot program designed to not only encourage our young people to stay in Minnesota, but also to encourage people from outside Minnesota to come here, attend school, participate in our workforce, and put down sustainable roots and grow families.

By utilizing existing networks between the Southwest Initiative Foundation, Minnesota West Campuses, Workforce Development Boards, and a multitude of local employers, we have developed a pilot workforce development program for SW Minnesota that we believe will work.

We simply ask for your support of this provision and let us try to begin to make a difference across our communities. We want to express our thanks to all the members of the conference committee for considering this provision, and we respectfully ask for your support.

Thank you.

Luverne Mayor Patrick Baustian
Granite Falls Mayor Dave Smiglewski
Worthington Mayor Rick Von Holdt
Marshall Mayor Robert Byrnes
Pipestone Mayor Dan Delaney
Canby Mayor Nancy Borman
Jackson Mayor Marcus Polz

