

The Honorable Mohamud Noor
Chairman Minnesota House Workforce and Business Development Finance and Policy Committee
379 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chairman Noor, Vice-Chair Xiong, and members of the House Workforce and Business Development Finance and Policy Committee,

We, the undersigned businesses in Clay County, Minnesota, respectfully urge you to support House File 4198 authored by Representative Paul Marquart, a workforce aid bill that brings our high schools, two and four-year colleges, businesses, non-profits, and elected local officials together in creating and implementing one unified strategy and plan to address our critical workforce needs. This much-needed funding will prepare learners for high-skill jobs of the future and address the state's workforce shortage.

As business leaders, we can attest to workforce challenges being one of the top hindrances to our region's growth and prosperity. According to a 2021 Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Study, job openings during the second quarter of last year reached a record high of 205,714 job vacancies (8% vacancy rate), 41.9% of vacancies were located in Greater Minnesota. Through the collaboration of public and private dollars, Community Career Workforce Academies are long-term and sustainable workforce solutions that foster robust learning environments, promote career exploration, produce choice-ready graduates, and establish a pipeline of qualified workers for our local economies. Counties that employ this creative solution will expose their students to a rigorous 21st-century education that provides an opportunity to earn a postsecondary credential or degree, fast-tracking them into high-wage, high-demand jobs or continued education.

The state of Minnesota must continue to invest in creative workforce solutions in order to overcome these widespread workforce challenges. The Moorhead Career Workforce Academy in Clay County is an extraordinary example of an innovative Community Career Workforce Academy that exists in the state of Minnesota. With the financial support outlined in this bill, new and existing academies can expand access to new and current Minnesota residents to ensure a strong pipeline of future talent and immediate development of the current underskilled workforce.

Thank you for your service to the great state of Minnesota, and your attention to this crucial workforce issue. Accordingly, we respectfully urge you to vote YES on HF 4198.

Sincerely,

Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce

Shannon Full, President and CEO

American Crystal Sugar

Tom Astrup, President and CEO

ASN Constructors

Greg Yavicoli, Construction Manager

Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota

Pam Gulleeson, VP of Public Affairs & Government Relations

ByteSpeed

Anna Hanson, Sale Director

City of Moorhead

Dan Mahli, City Manager

Clay County Commissioner

Jenna Kahly, District 1

Clay County Commissioner

Frank Gross, District 2

Clay County Commissioner

Jenny Mongeau, District 3

Clay County Commissioner

Kevin Campbell, District 4

Clay County Commissioner

David Ebinger, District 5

Concordia College

William Craft, President

Construction Engineers

James Hand, Business Development

D-S Beverages

Doug Restemayer, President

Downtown Moorhead Inc.

Derrick LaPoint, President and CEO

Eventide Senior Living Communities

Jon Riewer, President and CEO

First International Bank and Trust

S. Peter Stenehjem, President

Home Builders Association of Fargo Moorhead

Bryce Johnson, CEO

Hornbacher's

Matt Leiseth, President

Matt's Automotive

Matt Lachowitz, Owner and Founder

Minnesota State Community and Technical College

Dr. Carrie Brimhall, President

Moore Holding Company

Shane N. Waslaski, CEO

Moorhead Business Association

Sheri Larson, Executive Director

Moorhead Legacy Education Foundation

Janelle Leiseth, Board Member

Red River Valley Alliance

Esther Madrigal Diez, CEO

SCHEELS

Steve D. Scheels, President