

Southwest Minnesota Council of Mayors testimony for HF 1704

Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members, and thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in full support of House File 1704 and thank you to Representative Schomacker for carrying this important piece of legislation.

This Southwest MN Council of Mayors consists of:

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

The Southwest Minnesota Council of Mayors started meeting in the fall of 2019 to address issues that were affecting all our communities. We work on many issues affecting our communities as Mayors but the biggest issue that continued to affect every one of our communities was the shortage of workforce in critical high demand two-year technical trades career fields.

As a group of Mayors, we decided to concentrate on one issue. The single biggest issue that was directly affecting every one of our border communities was the vacuum being felt from our young future work force leaving for South Dakota to take advantage of the Build Dakota Scholarship Fund in South Dakota.

We continue to feel the absence of these young adults leaving for the Build Dakota Scholarship Fund's education opportunities since 2015 when South Dakota businesses started their Build Dakota Scholarship Fund.

Once these future workforce adults leave our communities to go to school in South Dakota, they finish their technical trade programs, fulfill their contractual labor agreement with their workforce business sponsor, purchase a home in South Dakota, and never to return to our communities for our workforce in critical shortage jobs.

We strongly ask for your support on this Southwestern Minnesota workforce development Scholarship Pilot Program.

