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Testimony of Deana Wiese
Executive Director, Information Technology Council of North Dakota
In Support of SB 2226
February 9, 2009

Chairman Holmberg and members of the Appropriations Committee:

For the record, my name is Deana Wiese, and I am the executive director of the Information Technology Council of North Dakota (ITCND). On behalf of ITCND, I would like to encourage your support of SB 2226.

ITCND was created in 2000 by North Dakota business, government and education leaders who recognized the need to strengthen the state's information technology infrastructure and reposition the state as a national leader in IT. ITCND has nearly 90 member organizations, with representatives from both the public and private sector.

ITCND supports SB 2226 because the board and membership have identified workforce recruitment as one of the IT industry's biggest challenges. The 2008 IT Workforce Needs Assessment indicated a need of 2,500 new and replacement IT workers in the state over the next 10 years.

The expansion of the current technology occupations loan forgiveness program to include the fields of science, technology, engineering and math and the increase in the maximum amount and duration of loan forgiveness will be an incentive for more students in STEM fields, including IT, to remain and work in North Dakota following their graduation from college.

I urge you to give SB 2226 a do pass recommendation.

Thanks for your time and consideration.