

# METRONORTH

## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

March 31, 2025

Dear Members of the House Higher Education Finance and Policy Committee:

The MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce represents over 700 businesses throughout the north metro. We are writing today to share our support regarding HF 2441 (Rep. Scott), which would add a three-year in-state residency and employment requirement to North Star Promise scholarship recipients.

As you know, Minnesota faces both short and long-term workforce challenges, from migration to demographics to economic disparities and barriers. Addressing these challenges and building and retaining a skilled workforce should be done collaboratively amongst legislators, educational institutions, and the business community.

The North Star Promise program, which provides financial support to students for necessary training or post-secondary education, is a helpful tool in the toolbox to address some of the aforementioned challenges. To be truly effective, however, students receiving this state aid should then be part of Minnesota's workforce post-graduation, completing the cycle of collaboration and directly addressing our state's workforce needs. Minnesota employers receive skilled employees, and taxpayers and the state receive a direct return on their investment.

The Build Dakota Scholarship program in South Dakota takes a similar approach and does include an employment requirement. A September 2024 article produced by *South Dakota News Watch*, an independent, nonprofit news organization, highlighted the successes – and the collaborations - achieved over the past ten years of the Build Dakota program. So successful, in fact, some of our state's border communities are competing with the program. Implementing an eligibility requirement to the North Star Promise program would therefore support our state in both the short and long term.

We therefore respectfully ask that you consider supporting HR 2441. Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Lori Higgins*

Lori Higgins, President