

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

December 30, 2019

Contact: Senator Kate Bolz, (402) 802-8312

### **Economic Development Task Force Recommendations Respond to Workforce Demands**

Lincoln, NE: The Economic Development Task Force of the Nebraska Legislature released recommendations today regarding workforce development.

Recognizing economic development as a priority, the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature established the Economic Development Task Force in 2017. The task force is responsible for making recommendations to the legislature regarding economic development in the state. The task force identified workforce development as a priority.

“Nebraskans have a strong work ethic and the state as a whole has a low unemployment rate. At the same time, our state faces a mismatch between available workers and the skills needed by employers. Specific shortage areas include: information technology, science, technology, engineering, and math, building trades, and more. The Economic Development Task Force recommendations support new opportunities for education and training for workers to grow our businesses and communities,” states Senator Kate Bolz, chair of the task force.

The workforce development recommendations include:

- i. Recommendation: Support a longitudinal data system to identify gaps in our education and training system, respond to those needs, and build on strengths.
- ii. Recommendation: Invest in apprenticeship programs aligned with high demand skills and industries.
- iii. Recommendation: Develop a career-education scholarship program for students pursuing careers in high demand, high skill, high wage jobs.
- iv. Recommendation: Retain young Nebraskans with needed skill sets through student loan repayment initiatives.

“Nebraska has difficulty retaining and attracting young talent - our state has one of the lowest growth rates for the population 25-29-years old. Overall, Nebraska has an annual “workforce

deficit” of 24,600 per year,<sup>1</sup>” said Senator John Arch, vice chair of the task force. “Our recommendations provide short and long term strategies for promoting good jobs and vibrant communities.”

The members of the committee included the following:

Chairperson of the Appropriations Committee: Senator John Stinner

Chairperson of the Banking, Commerce, and Insurance Committee: Senator Matt Williams

Chairperson of the Urban Affairs Committee: Senator Justin Wayne

Chairperson of the Revenue Committee: Senator Lou Ann Linehan

Chairperson of the Planning Committee: Senator Tony Vargas

Chairperson of the Education Committee: Senator Mike Groene

Chairperson of the Business and Labor Committee: Senator Matt Hanson

At Large: Senator Kate Bolz, Senator Dan Quick, Senator John Arch

Committee Chair: Senator Kate Bolz

Committee Vice Chair: Senator John Arch

#####

---

<sup>1</sup> Aksarben Foundation,

<https://www.aksarben.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Aksarben-Workforce-Development-Conference-Presentation-2019.pdf>