

**Sixty-eighth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota
In Regular Session Commencing Tuesday, January 3, 2023**

SENATE BILL NO. 2142
(Senators Mathern, K. Roers, Sorvaag)
(Representatives Ista, Meier, Mitskog)

AN ACT to create and enact a new section to chapter 54-60 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the creation of an office of legal immigration; to provide an appropriation; and to provide for a report.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

SECTION 1. A new section to chapter 54-60 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

Office of legal immigration - Duties.

There is created an office of legal immigration within the department of commerce. Employees of the office of legal immigration report to the commissioner. The office of legal immigration:

1. Shall develop and implement a statewide strategy to support businesses in recruiting and retaining foreign labor, including immigrants already in the United States and integration of immigrants into the state to promote economic opportunities for immigrant communities.
2. Shall advise and make recommendations to the governor, legislative assembly, and state agencies regarding immigrant integration and foreign labor issues.
3. Shall develop a pilot program to support businesses pursuing or employing legal immigrants and to support communities to develop immigration integration plans and activities.
4. May contract with other state agencies to develop and administer programs or services related to immigration integration and access to basic needs that promote entrance and movement throughout the workforce.
5. May contract with an organization with expertise related to the goals of the office of legal immigration.

SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE - OFFICE OF LEGAL IMMIGRATION - FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT POSITIONS - REPORT TO SIXTY-NINTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$485,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the department of commerce for the purpose of providing salaries and benefits for office of legal immigration staff, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2025. The department of commerce is authorized two full-time equivalent positions to administer the office of legal immigration. The department of commerce shall report to the sixty-ninth legislative assembly regarding the number of immigrants and employers assisted through the office of legal immigration during the 2023-25 biennium.

SECTION 3. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE STUDY - IMMIGRATION - REPORT TO SIXTY-NINTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. During the 2023-24 interim, the department of commerce shall conduct a study to determine immigration opportunities in the state, goals of the office of legal immigration, performance indicators to measure progress and success of immigration goals, and a structure for a pilot program to support businesses and communities pursuing legal immigration, and to develop a fee-based system for services to be implemented in the 2025-27 biennium. The study must include input from employers in the state. The department of commerce shall report its findings and recommendations to the sixty-ninth legislative assembly.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

Secretary of the Senate

Chief Clerk of the House

This certifies that the within bill originated in the Senate of the Sixty-eighth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota and is known on the records of that body as Senate Bill No. 2142.

Senate Vote: Yeas 41 Nays 5 Absent 1

House Vote: Yeas 64 Nays 28 Absent 2

Secretary of the Senate

Received by the Governor at _____ M. on _____, 2023.

Approved at _____ M. on _____, 2023.

Governor

Filed in this office this _____ day of _____, 2023,

at _____ o'clock _____ M.

Secretary of State