September 20, 2019

The NC Chamber strongly supports The Friday Institute's application for a grant under the Apprenticeships: Closing the Skills Gap funding opportunity.

The NC Chamber and its members have been supporters of expanded apprenticeship opportunities in the state, and we are working to create a greater culture of apprenticeship.

North Carolina continues to be a leader in advanced manufacturing and engineering. Members of the NC Chamber have increasingly explored the possibilities of AI in terms of training and preparing the next generation of workers.

It is critical that we look at many different industry sectors for successful apprenticeships. The Friday Institute's vision is particularly timely in this aspect. As a center of research and innovation, North Carolina is the ideal place to create this next generation of apprenticeships. Our technology firms, in places like Research Triangle Park, are leading the way in AI. In addition, the state has thriving IT, financial and technology sectors.

Workforce development continues to emerge as the top concern for NC Chamber members. In polls, meetings and discussions with individual business leaders, we hear consistently that there is a skills gap in terms of creating the needed workforce.

For this reason, North Carolina State University is an ideal partner for the Department of Labor's program. NCSU is a national leader in connecting higher education directly to the workforce. The university's leadership works directly with businesses on many important workforce development programs. NCSU's Centennial Campus is a model of public-private partnerships, and it leads the way in converting research into real world applications.

The Friday Institute has also been a critical research and policy partner to the business community.

The NC Chamber looks forward to collaborating with NCSU and the Friday Institute on this important work. It will be a great benefit to our members and businesses across the state.

Sincerely,

Gary J. Salamido
President and CEO