

Startup Entrepreneur Empowerment Delivery (SEED) Act – Quotes from Supporters

“Starting a business in college instead of going to class is not what my mom had in mind for my experience at NDSU – but I knew when we started developing Myriad Mobile that we had something that could innovate and unite our community. And that’s exactly what happened during Fargo’s 2011 flood, when an app we created allowing folks to get synthesized, up-to-date information about the flood quickly caught the attention of our local media, and then local businesses began hiring us in the area. And as a student without the financial, family, or part-time job obligations of many of my startup colleagues – I could commit to fulfilling those contracts. But too many startups in the Fargo community don’t have that luxury, and often need a small amount of funding to offset their financial obligations so they can develop and market their products, hire workers, and grow their business. That’s why Senator Heitkamp’s SEED Act is so needed – by providing the small seed funding investments to cities, we can encourage innovators to start and grow their businesses locally – creating new startup hubs in cities like Fargo and in states like North Dakota.”

- **Jake Joraanstad, CEO of Myriad Mobile and co-founder of Emerging Prairie in Fargo.**

“I grew up a Grand Forks kid, and I love my community. When I had the opportunity to start a business, Commercial Event Services, I wanted to stay in Grand Forks. But getting started with my son in his terrible twos and my daughter on the way didn’t make fundraising to get off the ground very easy – and fortunately, Senator Heitkamp is working to change that. With her SEED Act, startups in small cities like Grand Forks would get the boost they need to grow stronger faster. In my case, it would mean no longer having to turn down good contracts because I can’t hire the people I need. Startups just like mine have the power to make a real impact on the communities we love – and Senator Heitkamp’s bill would give us the seeds to grow.”

- **Nick Jensen, owner of Commercial Event Services in Grand Forks.**

“When I started EarthKind at my kitchen table in rural North Dakota, I had nothing more than an idea and a purpose. We had a serious problem with mice on the farm, and I knew there had to be a way to deal with it – without using poisons. When a mouse ran up my leg in a truck cab one day, I instinctively reached for my perfume, and it just clicked – that’s when my startup to deter mice with smell was born. However, getting my product to market was a huge challenge – especially from a rural area, with no money or experience. I had to get creative, so I sold a lot of vegetables at our local farmer’s market to pay for my first patent. Altogether it took eight years to commercialize my invention. By connecting small rural innovators with the right resources, Senator Heitkamp’s SEED Act would help hardworking startups like mine jumpstart their businesses, and help local towns invest in their rural talent to keep our communities creative and strong.”

- **Kari Warberg-Block, CEO and founder of EarthKind in Bismarck.**

“Moving to Fargo five years ago has been an incredibly rewarding experience – the startups I’ve worked with on behalf of the Greater Fargo/Moorhead Economic Development Corporation is completely reflective of the caring and self-sufficient nature of the community. In building partnerships between counties and local businesses, we’ve been able to foster the development of innovative, homegrown ideas by offering the resource assistance, and small-dollar investments in other aspects of business development – like marketing and patent protection – so that startups can focus on getting their products ready to launch into a businesses. By stepping in with the small seed funding so many promising entrepreneurs in our area need, Senator Heitkamp’s SEED Act is helping not just a few businesses get off the ground, but it’s a forward-looking approach to encouraging more brainpower investment in our community and our economy for years in the future.”

- **Jim Gartin, president of the Greater Fargo/Moorhead Economic Development Corporation (FMDEC) in Fargo.**

“Like so many startups across the state, when my husband, Dante, and I teamed up to start our company in 2009, we ran into not only a lack of funding to get going, but also help to successfully market and grow our business. In the past 8 years, we have benefited greatly from the growing entrepreneur infrastructure in North Dakota, both in terms of information and resources available to startups. But because small companies like ours don’t need as much money as some of the bigger players, we’re often left out of the game when it comes to seed capital – or we’re told we’re asking for too little. For new startups that are like we were, Senator Heitkamp’s SEED Act – which would create a federal pilot program to invest in startups in small cities across the country – would mean greater, long-term investments in our community and help local entrepreneurs keep innovating and generating business locally for years to come.”

- **Holly Anderson Battocchi, cofounder of Elinor Specialty Coatings with her husband, Dante Battocchi in Fargo.**