

Senate Bill 2308
Government and Veterans Affairs
Rep. Austen Schauer, Chair
Thursday, March 13, 2025
Pioneer Room, State Capitol

Good afternoon, Chair Schauer and members of the Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. I am Jacy Schafer, Deputy Chief of Staff on Gov. Armstrong's team. I joined Gov. Armstrong's team last March while he was campaigning for governor. One thing our team heard on the campaign trail was the need to refocus our efforts in state government to be consumer driven.

During the campaign and transition into office we started the process of reviewing boards and visiting with other states that have passed similar legislation. We also looked at the interim study done by the former labor commissioner. In preparation for this session, our team evaluated what could be eliminated or absorbed by a state agency to prevent duplicative work. In addition, we also worked to identify boards, commissions, and task forces that were no longer mission critical.

In developing the list of 17 boards proposed for elimination in Senate Bill 2308, all boards were notified they would be eliminated if the bill passed. We received feedback from many who felt their work could either be continued under an agency or was no longer mission critical to the state of North Dakota.

I would like to highlight a few that are proposed for elimination today:

Energy policy commission (known as EmPower)

- This commission was established under Executive Order under Senator Hoeven's leadership as governor. Later it was codified in Century Code. When it was established, the energy industry was going in many directions prior to the rebirth of the Bakken. We reached out to the partners on the commission, and they felt it had served its purpose.

Midwest interstate passenger rail compact

- The purpose is to identify and seek to develop partnerships between states, the rail industry and labor to develop a long-term, interstate plan for high-speed rail passenger service. Our agencies already are in communication with those around the Midwest, building the relationships needed to further develop rail around the Midwest.

America 250 Commission

- In 2026, we will celebrate America's 250th birthday. This commission is a prime example of a commission being established for a unique purpose and need but not adding a sunset date to dissolve it. We simply added a sunset date for this commission to fulfill its purpose and expire Dec. 31, 2026.

Under SB 2308, the task force will review all governmental boards, commissions, committees, councils, and task forces. Boards will be asked to state their purpose and mission, how many times they meet in a calendar year, meeting attendance, and other questions the task force deems relevant.

Our goal is to ensure this task force finds efficiencies, prevents duplicative work, and eliminates boards or commissions no longer mission critical to the state of North Dakota. Thank you for allowing me to share further background with you today, and I will stand for any questions.