

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Jason Dockter, and I am a licensed security officer employed by Elite Security Solutions, LLC. based in West Fargo, ND. Thank you for taking the time to hear and read our testimonies this morning. I regret that I am unable to attend in person, but I did want to provide a brief written statement to voice my opposition to the proposed Senate Bill 2051.

My opposition to this bill is simple: it is focused on a wholly unnecessary and drastic increase of prices for security and private investigation licenses for agencies and individuals throughout the state of North Dakota. Prices are rising on every element of our lives in our country today—it makes sense that there would be a price increase on our licensure as well. However, the amount being proposed in the current bill is not only insulting, it is fundamentally dangerous as well.

There are several large security agencies in the state that generate sufficient revenue to be able to provide these fees, but there are many smaller agencies that provide critical services that the larger services do not, and yet their revenue is much smaller. The increase in license fees would place an undue strain upon these agencies. While an increase in fees may not be the “make or break” item, it has the potential to compound with other expenditures that could result in an agency laying off employees. In our day and age, the security sector is not one that should be shrinking.

The bill and its supporter(s) with the North Dakota Private Investigation and Security Board (NDPISB) have spoken of the necessary increase in fees in order to hire a part-time position on a temporary basis in order to clear a “backlog” of paperwork for issuing security licenses. Once this backlog is cleared, I imagine this temporary employee will be released from his or her duties. And yet, there has never been any discussion about reducing the fees to their current level.

As they are currently provided, the security licenses are only valid for (1) calendar year. The NDPISB has had no difficulty cashing the checks for the applications of these licenses, and yet there have been periods where I have gone without a valid license on my person for over three years. This is a tremendous problem for several reasons, the least of which is that we are paying for a service and not being provided with a product. This is tantamount to theft. Additionally, each licensed security professional in the state is required to have their license on their person while on duty. If the officer is involved in an incident, the first question a police officer or a lawyer would ask for is that officer’s license. If the officer does not present a license on their person, the problems would only just begin for that individual.

If the discussion today is about amending the fees for the security license, I would submit to you for your consideration that the fees be amended to be valid for a period of (2) or (3) calendar years as well. What this would accomplish is that the majority of licenses issued in the state would not require an annual re-application and the “backlog” of paperwork would resolve itself organically.

We are all called to manage the finances of our households in a responsible manner, and the NDPISB is no exception. An increase in licensure fees as outlined in SB 2051 is not a responsible solution to the problem at hand.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I thank you again for your time and consideration on this matter.

Respectfully,

Jason Dockter