

**HCR 3007 | House Human Services Committee**

**Tuesday, January 19, 2021 | 10:30am**

Testimony of Jace Beehler  
Chief of Staff, Governor Burgum

Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee, my name is Jace Beehler. I serve as the chief of staff for Governor Burgum and Lt. Governor Sanford. I stand today in opposition to House Concurrent Resolution 3007.

Today, North Dakota, the United States and the globe remain in states of emergency due to the pandemic. While great progress has been made in North Dakota, the virus has not yet subsided and continues to flare across the United States. With cases in the US now over 24 million and deaths over 400,000 the need for flexibility and nimbleness remain critical to the statewide emergency response.

I stand today not to debate the merits of individual decisions and/or orders, but to ask for your consideration as leaders in the state of North Dakota. As we make progress towards decreased positivity, a more stable hospitalization rate and reduced active cases, now is not the time to take our foot off the pedal.

While a new administration takes office this week in Washington, we know there will be federal resources coming to the state. While we have been able to manage these resources in an efficient manner, the new administration may have other requirements and/or regulations that are connected with the state emergency declaration we discuss today.

As has been the case throughout the pandemic, this emergency declaration provides us the ability and flexibility to meet the needs of all associations and industries as they adapt to the challenges provided by this pandemic. We have utilized the emergency to manage the situation administratively to the best of our ability and need this tool to maintain our response.

The message to North Dakotans from this committee and this the body should be to remain vigilant. While we've administered over 60,000 doses of the vaccine, we have about 120,000 North Dakotans age 65 and over, so we need to continue to reduce transmissible moments and protect our most vulnerable population until more can be vaccinated. To do this we need the emergency declaration to maintain our cross agency and cross state collaboration.

Today I urge a DO NOT PASS on HCR 3007. Just as our neighbors in South Dakota, Minnesota and Montana, let us maintain our emergency to send the correct message to our citizens and enable our state to respond in the most effective possible way. We long for the day when we can safely remove our masks, have dinner with large groups of friends and family and get back to normal. We are close but not yet there.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I am happy to stand for any questions you may have.