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Testimony in Neutral of
Senate Bill No. 2240
House Appropriations
January 23, 2023

TESTIMONY OF
Josh Teigen, Commissioner, ND Department of Commerce

Chairman Vigessa and members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Josh Teigen, Commissioner of the North Dakota Department of Commerce. I am here today with a neutral testimony on Senate Bill 2240 which proposes Commerce administer a base retention grant program for communities with an air force base or air national guard facilities.

The North Dakota Department of Commerce works to improve the quality of life for North Dakota citizens by leading efforts to attract, retain and expand wealth. The air force and air national guard and more broadly, the military and defense industries have a major impact on the economic diversification and resiliency of North Dakota.

Maintaining an air force and national guard presence benefits citizens across North Dakota as it results in an increase in direct employment, indirect employment through the companies that support the military operations, as well as an increase in tertiary employment through the need for an expanded service sector. This all leads to an increase in tax generation for the state.

Workforce is one of if not the most important challenges North Dakota faces today and support of a strong military presence in the state can be a part of an "all of the above" strategy the state deploys. Military operations in North Dakota brings in servicemen and women from around the country who will be looking for a place to call home after they exit the military. North Dakota offers a high quality of living and family friendly communities which appeals to servicemembers transitioning to the civilian workforce.

In conclusion, I thank you for considering Commerce's administration of a base retention grant program for these communities and I'd like to recommend a minor revision to Senate Bill 2240, which would allow Commerce to develop guidelines for the use of funds. This revision would ensure Commerce has the ability to drive these dollars to uses which have the highest economic impact. Commerce urges your support of SB 2240, thank you.