

TESTIMONY OF
DARIN HANSON
NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES
HOMELAND SECURITY DIVISION
BEFORE THE
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
14 FEBRUARY 2023
HOUSE BILL 1398

Chairman Heinert and members of the committee, I am Darin Hanson, Homeland Security Division Director at the North Dakota North Dakota Department of Emergency Services (NDDDES) and I am here today in support of HB 1398. Plainly and clearly, cybersecurity is homeland security.

As cyber criminals conduct non-stop attacks against our citizens and critical infrastructure, nation states stand poised to probe and attack the same targets in modern grey zone warfare. Like our ongoing efforts to build a society prepared for natural disasters and other emergencies, we need a populace who knows how to avoid being involved in a cybersecurity incident. The most effective way we can do this is by ensuring that proper cyber hygiene is followed by all our citizens. We are only as strong as our weakest link.

Meanwhile, cyber-attacks continue to increase, impacting the critical infrastructure our citizens rely on. As the state agency responsible for coordinating response and recovery to cyber emergencies external to the state's own network, it is imperative that we first focus our efforts on avoiding cyber incidents in the first place. Make no mistake, we will pay the price for cyber attacks one way or another. It can be on the front end through investing in our citizens and future workforce through cyber education, or we can pay for it in response and recovery costs.

As we move forward in this new future where cyber threats and attacks become a larger part of the NDDDES mission, it is important to recognize that we will need both a cyber ready workforce within the agency and also a cadre of cyber experts ready to assist in the response to cyber-attacks. NDDDES has just begun to establish a voluntary Cyber Incident Support Team and is working with the ND Department of Information Technology and other stakeholders to move this much needed capability forward. This bill will both support efforts to prevent an incident response and increase the pool of cyber professionals we can call on to support missions across the state.

HB1398 furthers the advancement of existing efforts at the NDDDES such as support for CyberCon, Cyber Madness, the State & Local Cybersecurity Grant Program, and portions of State Homeland Security Grant funds that are set aside for advancing cybersecurity across North Dakota. Let's continue to show the country and world that North Dakota is the most cyber ready state by voting Do Pass on HB1398.

Mr. Chairman, that completes my testimony, and I will stand by for any questions that you may have. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak today.