

TESTIMONY OF
MAJ JAY SHELDON
NORTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
BEFORE THE
HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
06 MARCH 2023
SENATE BILL 2187

Good morning, Chairman Weisz, members of the committee, I am Jay Sheldon, Strategy and Policy Officer for the North Dakota National Guard (NDNG) and administrator for the Task Force for Military Issues in North Dakota (TF MIND). I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 2187.

I would like to take a moment to explain TF MIND. It is a Governor's appointed task force chaired by the Lt. Governor with members from around North Dakota with a focus on Minot, Grand Forks, Fargo, and Bismarck, communities with the largest military footprint. The group normally meets twice a year and discusses issues that impact military members and their families in North Dakota. TF MIND has used a Department of Defense website that lists the top issues, heavily focused on occupational licensing and military children.

A Department of Defense remains focused on the removal of barriers military spouses face when trying to sustain their professional careers, despite the mobile lifestyle.

The North Dakota military community is grateful for the previous adoption of four compacts: the Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact, Physical Therapy Licensure Compact, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact, and the Emergency Medical Services Licensure Compact.

The Compact will help counselors by affording them greater ease of mobility, cutting drastically the time needed for authorization to practice in a new state. The Compact will also create new market opportunities for counselors. The Compact will help clients by improving continuity of care when clients or counselors travel or relocate.

Participating in the counselor compact increases access to mental health service, improves continuity of care, streamlines licensing processes, and increases professional mobility.

We are amid a period when there is a greater need for services of this type than there are providers available for the general population with even fewer available for military members and their families. This would be an impactful step in gaining or retaining those services for North Dakotans in need.

The efforts the North Dakota Legislature are appreciated by the military community. Thank you for your consideration of SB 2187.

I stand for questions.