

January 23, 2023
Support Testimony for Senate Bill 2240

Senator Bekkedahl and members of the North Dakota Senate Appropriations Committee:

The Minot Area Chamber EDC's vision is to be 'the go-to organization for our business community to drive key initiatives that build and strengthen our economy'. As an organization the Chamber EDC has rolled out a 5-year strategic plan with one of its five key pillars being support for military. We recognize the significant impact military has on our state with an economic impact of \$1.16 billion and locally with Minot Air Force Base's FY21 annual economic impact of \$607 million.

Minot Area Chamber EDC will continue efforts to secure funding from the City of Minot, Minot Area Chamber EDC member-investors, and raise funds privately for support of military. Local funds will be used to support military appreciation events, the Adopt-An-Airman program, Military Affairs Committee, Honorary Commanders program, Right Start program, and more. State funds would be used for strategic advocacy and awareness, along with preparing the state for Sentinel. After two sessions without funding there is a critical need to restore community military funding through the Department of Commerce Base Retention Grant Program.

The U.S. Air Force is replacing its aging Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) with the Sentinel ICBM. The Sentinel ICBM represents the modernization of the land-based leg of the U.S. nuclear triad. Nuclear deterrence is the #1 priority mission of the Department of Defense. Sentinel will replace 400 Minuteman III ICBMs currently in service for more than 50 years at F.E. Warren Air Force Base (Wyoming), Malmstrom Air Force Base (Montana) and Minot Air Force Base (North Dakota). Minot is the last to receive the new weapon system.

Existing launch facilities, missile alert facilities, communication systems, infrastructure, and technologies will be modernized and replaced as necessary to support the new Sentinel weapon system. The Minuteman III ICBMs will be decommissioned. With Minot being last to receive the new system Minot it is critical that we stay diligent in our efforts to ensure the program is fully funded and realized.

It also is important to plan for the workforce needs a project of this scale brings. Planning the workforce component needs to start today to ensure our state is ready for what lies ahead.

We respectfully ask for your support of SB 2240.



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