



FMWF Chamber Support for SB 2240

01/23/2023

Chair Bekkedahl and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

For the record, my name is Katherine Grindberg, and I have the pleasure of serving as Executive Vice President of the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo (FMWF) Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's mission is to be a catalyst for economic growth and prosperity for businesses, members, and the greater community. On behalf of our over 1,900 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of SB 2240.

I am honored to come before this committee, in partnership with other communities from across this great state, to respectfully ask for your support of the Base Retention Grant Program. In 2011 this program was established to maintain our state's military excellence and increase our competitive advantage, while maintaining missions at Minot Air Force Base, Grand Forks Air Force Base, and the Fargo Air National Guard Base. This program remains to be a truly collaborative effort across the state to maintain and support North Dakota's military missions and personnel.

North Dakota has always understood the importance of supporting those who serve, and we are extremely grateful for the support of previous legislative assemblies and their commitment to this program. The soldiers and airmen stationed throughout North Dakota play a critical role in our state's vibrancy. In FY 2021, the total military economic impact across the state was over a billion dollars. As it relates to our local communities, these bases have a profound impact far beyond economics.

The Air National Guard's 119th Wing has been a tremendous asset not only for our community, but for our nation. From fighting flood in the Red River Valley, flying F-16 over our nation's capital, supporting the fight against COVID-19, or executing world-class MQ-9 precision attack and reconnaissance, kinetic and non-kinetic target intelligence production and expeditionary support, the nationally recognized Happy Hooligans are always ready to serve our community, state, and country.

Whether it be strategic advocacy and awareness, advancement of personnel recruitment, or community-based programming and support, the FMWF Chamber has had the honor of supporting the Happy Hooligans in a variety of ways. Our private sector partners have continued to step up and financially support these efforts alongside the public funds and are committed to continuing to do so.

On behalf of our members, I respectfully ask the 68th North Dakota Legislative Assembly to support the appropriation of \$1.9 million to continue our mission to maintain our state's military excellence and increase our competitive advantage. Thank you to the committee for your time and consideration this morning, I would be happy to stand for any questions.

Respectfully,

Katherine Grindberg

Executive Vice President
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