

To: Senate Education Committee

From: Amber Flynn, Vice-President Grand Forks Public Schools

January 18, 2023

RE: For SB 2223 Residency Requirements for military installation school board members

Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I write to you today in support of SB 2223. In Grand Forks, ND, we have the privilege of being served by the GFAFB and welcoming their members and families into the Grand Forks and surrounding communities. In Grand Forks, we are unique in that our district has two school districts, the Grand Forks Public Schools and the Grand Forks AFB school. Many families like to live on bases because of the small K-8 school and find it a benefit for their children. Others, choose to live in town, pay property taxes, and attend Grand Forks public schools. Also, most children in high school living on the base attend high school at Grand Forks public schools in town.

I have served on the Grand Forks public school board for 7+ years. During that time, we have found it necessary and important to seek the input of our military partners as it related to partnering on initiatives, making district wide decisions, and implementing curriculum. For example, the STEM camp grant that is received every year through the DoD is a partnership that has served students in a variety of ways and provides a bridge between military life and civilian life.

As a dependent to two Air Force parents, I understand the unique challenges that military families face. Often, one or more parents are serving on deployment, students have move multiple times in their educational career, parents may be navigating a different style of education (ex. Overseas education vs. American education), transportation from “out of town” to attend high school each morning (ie. possible transportation barriers), and the list goes on and on.

We are thankful for the perspectives of the GFAFB board members, and this bill will help expand representation. It has been a struggle over the years to keep individuals on the board given the requirements of only living on base. Their perspective is valuable and a much-needed asset. Thank you for your time.