



North Dakota House of Representatives

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Government and Veteran Affairs Committee, I am Jeremy Olson, State Representative, District 26, representing most of McKenzie and Dunn Counties. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I stand before you to urge the rejection of the "Defend the Guard" proposed legislation of HB 1315. While the intentions behind this bill may be rooted in concern for our national sovereignty and the protection of our service members, it is my belief that the bill is fundamentally flawed and would have unintended negative consequences for both our national defense and the veterans who have served this country honorably.

Impact on National Defense and Readiness

First and foremost, HB 1315 bill seeks to restrict state National Guard units from being deployed to overseas military operations. On the surface, this may seem like an effort to safeguard the interests of states and their citizens, but in practice, it could severely hamper our military's ability to respond to national security threats quickly and effectively.

Our military, particularly the National Guard, plays a vital role in a wide range of operations, from natural disaster relief to combat missions overseas. National Guard units are often called upon to supplement the active-duty military during times of crisis, ensuring that we have the necessary resources and manpower to defend our nation. By requiring state legislatures to approve overseas deployments, this bill creates unnecessary delays and bureaucratic hurdles in situations that demand immediate action.

In times of emergency—whether a natural disaster, an international conflict, or a terrorist attack—decisions need to be made swiftly, without the constraints of political gridlock. A delay in sending our National Guard troops could cost lives and undermine our readiness to protect this nation.

Constitutional and Legal Concerns

This legislation may also raise serious constitutional and legal questions. The U.S. Constitution grants the federal government the power to raise and support armies and to provide for the common defense of the nation. While the National Guard is indeed a state-based institution, its federal mission is equally vital. The federal government, in partnership with the states, ensures that the Guard can function both locally and abroad as necessary.

Requiring state legislatures to approve every overseas deployment could create a patchwork approach to military readiness, where some states may authorize deployments while others do not. This could ultimately undermine the cohesion and effectiveness of the National Guard as a force, creating a situation where the federal government and state governments are at odds over how to respond to national security threats.

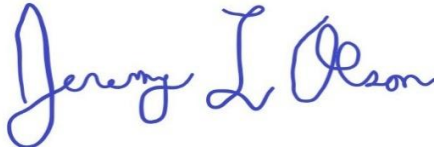
Moreover, HB 1315 could provoke legal challenges that would tie up resources, divert attention from critical issues, and, most importantly, distract us from our overall national security priorities.

In conclusion, while HB 1315 may stem from a desire to protect the rights of states and their National Guard units, its potential risks to national security, legal stability, and the well-being of our veterans far outweigh any benefits. Our primary responsibility as policymakers is to ensure the safety and security of our nation, and this bill stands to undermine that mission.

I respectfully ask this committee to reject HB 1315 and to work toward solutions that prioritize the readiness and cohesion of our military while respecting the vital contributions of our National Guard members.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeremy L Olson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeremy L Olson MBA, CSP

ND House of Representatives, District 26

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