

*Good morning. My name is Melinda Ahrens. I am a military spouse of 23 years and would like to show my appreciation for the great state of ND. Our family has had the privilege of calling Minot, ND, our home twice over the course of my husband's decorated 27-year military career. We appreciate all you do for our military families and would like you to consider allowing the cottage bakers in the area to be involved in interstate commerce (SB 2386). Currently 23-09.5-02 Section 3a, transactions under this section may not involve interstate commerce which negatively impacts the hard work and ability of cottage bakers to promote themselves and their businesses. Business owners spend countless hours building their customer base and perfecting their products. They can continue to raise their profits by selling the previously mentioned products online and in turn, reach a wider base increasing their profits and spending habits. However, ND cottage bakers cannot take advantage of this opportunity due to current law. Many military cottage bakers spend countless hours building their customer base and products only to be told that their spouse must relocate to ND to continue answering their nation's call. Since ND does not allow cottage bakers to ship across state lines, the military business owner must start from scratch negatively affecting their business, which in turn, negatively impacts the money spent in ND. By allowing all ND cottage bakers to ship and participate in interstate commerce, ND recognizes the sacrifice it takes to own a business and encourages cottage bakers to expand their markets. These facts will only benefit the state of ND by keeping cottage bakers' income here in ND, which in effect increases the state's income tax revenue and local spending. It is a win-win for all involved. Again, thank you for the support you give to our military families across the state. Thank you for the opportunity to advocate for change.*