TESTIMONY OF
LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAY SHELDON
NORTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
BEFORE THE
SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELEPEMENT COMMITTEE
21 FEBRUARY 2025
HOUSE BILL 1035

Chair Wobbema and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jay Sheldon, and I am here representing the North Dakota Military Commission to express support for HB 1035, which would have North Dakota join an interstate licensing compact for social workers.

North Dakota recognizes the unique challenges faced by these families, particularly the frequent relocations that come with military service. For military spouses who are licensed social workers, moving to a new state can involve navigating varied licensure requirements, which can delay their ability to provide services and support to our communities.

By joining the social work licensing compact, North Dakota would facilitate a smoother transition for these professionals, allowing licensed social workers from the other 22 compact member states (15 pending legislation) to practice in our state with reduced administrative burdens. This is crucial as we continue to address the increasing demand for social work services in our communities, especially considering growing awareness around mental health, child welfare, and family support.

Supporting this compact not only helps military families but also enhances the overall capacity of our social service systems. It enables our communities to tap into a broader pool of qualified social workers who can provide critical services to those in need, including the military connected population.

Adopting this compact demonstrates North Dakota's commitment to being a military-friendly state and reinforces our dedication to ensuring that all residents have access to the support they need. By reducing barriers for social workers, we can foster a more effective and responsive system that addresses the diverse needs of our entire population.

On behalf of the North Dakota Military Commission, I ask you to support HB 1035.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.