

TESTIMONY OF
LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAY SHELDON
NORTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
BEFORE THE
SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
23 JANUARY 2023
SENATE BILL 2198

Chair Wobbema, members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2198. My name is Jay Sheldon, Strategy and Policy Officer for the North Dakota National Guard. I am here to express our support for this legislation, which seeks to waive the 90-day waiting period for state employees to utilize their military leave.

North Dakota has a proud tradition of supporting our service members and veterans. Senate Bill 2198 continues that tradition by addressing an issue impacting state employees who are also members of the National Guard or Reserves. This bill removes a barrier and ensures that these dedicated individuals can fulfill their military obligations while also beginning employment with the state.

Currently, state employees must complete a 90-day waiting period before becoming eligible to use their military leave benefits. For service members, this delay can create challenges. The nature of military service can require short notice availability for training, drills, or emergency response. By waiving this waiting period, Senate Bill 2198 eliminates a barrier that can complicate a service member's ability to meet their military obligations in the beginning of their state employment.

Waving the 90-day waiting period simply allows eligible employees to access this benefit sooner, without increasing the overall leave entitlement. It is a small but meaningful adjustment that has a profound effect on the lives of our service members and their families.

In conclusion, Senate Bill 2198 is a simple act that supports our state's workforce, honors the sacrifices of our military personnel, and strengthens North Dakota's commitment to those who serve. I ask for your support for SB 2198.

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