



Chairman Vigessaa and members of the House Appropriations Committee,

I am Kevin Black and I serve as the board chair for the Minot Area Chamber EDC. It is the mission of the Minot Area Chamber EDC to advocate for and invest in business activity by being a collaborative partner in the community, focused on improving quality of life for all. On behalf of our nearly 700 member investors, I offer testimony in support of SB 2240.

We recognize the significant impact military has on our state with an economic impact of \$1.16 billion and locally with Minot Air Force Base's FY21 annual economic impact of \$607 million.

Support for military is one of our organization's strategic five key pillars. Minot Area Chamber EDC will continue efforts to secure funding from the City of Minot, Minot Area Chamber EDC member-investors, and raise funds privately for support of military. Local funds will be used to support military appreciation events, the Adopt-An-Airman program, Military Affairs Committee, Honorary Commanders program, Right Start program, and more.

State funds would be used for strategic advocacy and awareness, along with preparing the state for Sentinel. After two sessions without funding there is a critical need to restore community military funding through the Department of Commerce Base Retention Grant Program.

The U.S. Air Force is replacing its aging Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) with the Sentinel ICBM. The Sentinel ICBM represents the modernization of the land-based leg of the U.S. nuclear triad. Nuclear deterrence is the #1 priority mission of the Department of Defense. Sentinel will replace 400 Minuteman III ICBMs currently in service for more than 50 years at F.E. Warren Air Force Base (Wyoming), Malmstrom Air Force Base (Montana) and Minot Air Force Base (North Dakota). Minot is the last to receive the new weapon system.

Existing launch facilities, missile alert facilities, communication systems, infrastructure, and technologies will be modernized and replaced as necessary to support the new Sentinel weapon system. The Minuteman III ICBMs will be decommissioned. With Minot being last to receive the new system Minot it is critical that we stay diligent in our efforts to ensure the program is fully funded and realized.

It also is important to plan for the workforce needs a project of this scale brings. Planning the workforce component needs to start today to ensure our state is ready for what lies ahead.

We respectfully ask for your support of SB 2240.

Kevin Black
Minot Area Chamber EDC 2023 Board Chair
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