



Chairman Vigesaa and members of the House Appropriations Committee,

Good morning, Chairman and members of the House Appropriations Committee. I am Brekka Kramer the President and CEO of the Minot Area Chamber EDC and a proud member of Governor Burgum's Task Force for Military Issues in North Dakota executive committee, which is also called TF MIND. Nationally I serve as an U.S. Air Force Global Strike Command Civic Leader and was recently appointed to the Strategic Deterrent Coalition Board of Directors.

I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 2240. I am joined by leadership from Grand Forks and Fargo in a united front to support military throughout North Dakota. What brought our communities together is TF MIND the Governor's appointed task force chaired by the Lt. Governor Tammy Miller. The original task force that stood up in January 2019 included members from around North Dakota with a focus on Minot, Grand Forks and Fargo, the three communities with the largest military footprint. TF MIND has expanded to include additional state departments and communities. TF MIND meets to discuss issues that impact military members and their families. I want to thank you Governor Burgum for bringing our communities together.

The communities of Minot, Grand Forks and Fargo each lead efforts to support military and while this looks a little different in each of our respective communities, the efforts are critical as the total military economic impact in North Dakota was estimated at \$1.16 billion in FY 2021.

With the bill in front of you, we seek merely to restore public community military funding to the previous levels of \$500,000 to all three communities. Then further enhanced funding in the community of Minot over that traditional amount by another \$400,000 to prepare our great state for the Sentinel modernization project.

As we locally support military efforts our communities routinely raise funds privately. In the past decade the private funds were leveraged with public dollars. However, that changed during the 2019 session and we have all gone without the state funding. Now our communities have additional challenges that each face to continue to support our military today while preparing for big changes, and opportunities, that are around the corner.

The military support program has been in the past, and we propose today, an appropriation to the Department of Commerce Base Retention Grant Program for communities of Minot, Grand Forks and Fargo. The funds appropriated by the legislature are for maintaining the missions and attracting new military missions at Minot Air Force Base and Grand Forks Air Force Base, and to support the North Dakota National Guard in Fargo. To sum up the math, the total proposed funds of \$1.9 million would be allocated as \$900,000 to Minot and \$500,000 each to Grand Forks and Fargo.

Both Adjutant General Al Dorhmann and Department of Commerce Commissioner Josh Teigen are on record in support of SB 2240. As General Dorhmann shared in his testimony to Senate Appropriations, "The time to make sure your Bases are in the best possible position to maintain your missions and your personnel in the state isn't when the BRAC comes about....the time is in the calm." BRAC stands for Base Realignment and Closure and is the process the Department of Defense has used to reorganize its installation infrastructure.

It is critical that we stay diligent in the advocacy work we do to maintain missions and attract new missions. We work continuously to ensure our state in the best position we can be.

- Brekka Kramer testimony continued -

At this time, I'll share more about Minot Air Force Base and what lies ahead.

Minot Air Force Base for FY21 had an economic impact of \$607 million. Minot isn't Minot without our Base. Minot Air Force Base is the only dual-wing nuclear capable base in the nation hosting two legs of the nuclear triad. The three legs of the U.S. nuclear triad serve as the backbone of America's national security. The triad, along with assigned forces provide 24/7 deterrence to prevent catastrophic actions from our adversaries. The triad stands ready, if necessary, to deliver a decisive response, anywhere, anytime. The triad includes land, sea and air. Minot Air Force Base has both the land and air deterrence. The 5th Bomb Wing operates 26 B-52 aircraft, and the 91st Missile Wing operates 150 Minuteman III ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile) sites. Major modernization projects are underway for the bombers, missiles and the weapons system.

The mega Department of Defense project Minot is working to prepare North Dakota for is the U.S. Air Force's Sentinel ICBM weapon system, formerly known as Ground Based Strategic Deterrence (GBSD), a critical modernization of the ground-based leg of the U.S. nuclear triad, the bedrock of national security. The Sentinel system replaces the aging ICBM system, which has been in service for over 50 years. No modernization project has ever been fully executed and Minot Air Force Base is third behind F.E. Warren AFB in Cheyenne, WY and Malmstrom AFB in Great Falls, MT.

In today's dollars, Sentinel will invest \$3.2 billion into North Dakota alone. The state will need to prepare for a workforce hub for thousands of construction staff and support personnel. On base construction will include new construction and renovation to support command, communications, maintenance, training and storage facilities.

What's unique is the construction off Base in North Dakota which includes 15 Alert Facilities, 150 Launch Facilities, new communication towers, miles of new and existing utility corridors, multiple construction laydown and staging areas that will be in place for an estimated 3-5 years, and North Dakota is the only state with a Tribal resolution with Three Affiliated Tribes. With F.E. Warren AFB scheduled to break ground this fall, it will be Minot's priority to solidify strategic relationships at all levels and get boots on the ground to prepare North Dakota for the largest Department of Defense modernization project ever undertaken.

Minot Air Force Base plays a vital role in our national defense and our state economy, and it is our responsibility to ensure that our community has the resources it needs to continue to support advancement of the modernization projects that are underway.

The Department of Commerce Base Retention Grant Program funding will support strategic advocacy and awareness and Sentinel preparation. Specifically with strategic meetings with leadership at all levels, hosting a Nuclear Triad Symposium in Washington DC to bringing a Nuclear Triad Symposium to North Dakota. Building strategic partnerships with key military associations and organizations and more. With Sentinel preparation workforce is a key area of focus, along with coalition development and strategic partnerships.

North Dakota has always understood the importance of supporting those who serve and has supported the communities of Minot, Grand Forks and Fargo in past legislative sessions with a mission to maintain military excellence and increase our competitive advantage for the North Dakota National Guard while maintaining missions for Minot Air Force Base and Grand Forks Air Force Base.

I ask for your support of SB 2240 and will stand by for any questions that you may have.