

**Senate Appropriations**  
**Chairman – Senator Brad Bekkedahl**  
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Testimony of:

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Good morning, Chairman Bekkedahl, members of the appropriations committee, I am Brekka Kramer, President | CEO of the Minot Area Chamber EDC. 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 Governor Burgum's Task Force for Military Issues in North Dakota (TF MIND). TF MIND is a Governor's appointed task force chaired by the Lt. Governor. 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, communities with the largest military footprint. It 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 for FY 2021 was estimated at \$1.16 billion.

Our communities routinely raise funds privately. Each supports military efforts. In the past decade the funds were leveraged with public dollars. However, that changed during the 2019 session and we have all gone without that public 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.

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

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.

At this time, I'll share more about Minot Air Force Base and what lies ahead and then will look to Grand Forks and Fargo to share their unique challenges.

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 5<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing operates 26 B-52 aircraft, and the 91<sup>st</sup> Missile Wing operates 150 Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) 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.