

Professional Fire Fighters of North Dakota

Darren Schimke, President | 218-779-4122 | dschimke@wiktel.com

3/5/2025

House Industry, Business and Labor Committee

Re: Support of SB 2135

Chairman Warrey and members of the House Industry, Business and Labor Committee.

My name is Darren Schimke, President of the Professional Fire Fighters of North Dakota. I represent 420 professional firefighters throughout the State of North Dakota. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony demonstrating our support of SB 2135.

I have been the President of the PFFND for the past 9 years and I previously held the office of President at my home Local in Grand Forks for 14 years. I've attended countless line of duty funeral services throughout the Midwest. At some of those services, I've been afforded the privilege to visit with the spouses of the fallen. One of the common denominators during those visits is funeral expenses and on-going family living expenses. As much as the current death benefit is appreciated, unfortunately, as some of you may know, said death benefit of \$10,000.00 won't cover funeral expenses. This leaves next to nothing for the minor children's living expenses.

In Minnesota, the line of duty monthly death benefit to the spouse is 60% of the deceased firefighter's salary. Minor dependents receive a monthly death benefit of 10% of the deceased firefighter's salary. South Dakota's line of duty monthly death benefit to the spouse is 66 2/3% of the deceased firefighter's salary while the minor dependents receive a monthly allowance.

The proposed death benefit of \$25,000.00 contained within SB 2135 may just be a lifeline that I know will be appreciated beyond any of our wildest imagination.

Thank you for this opportunity. The PFFND respectfully request a Do Pass recommendation on SB 2135.

Darren Schimke