

2021 SENATE EDUCATION

SB 2175

2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee
Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2175
1/18/2021

A BILL relating to occupational licensure of members of the military and military spouses; and to provide for a report.

Chairman Schaible opened the hearing on SB 2175 at 3:00 p.m.

Discussion Topics:

- Fix bill passed last session.

Sen. Meyer: Introduced the bill in favor. #1016.

Sen. Burckhard, Dist. 5, Minot: Testified in favor

Jay Sheldon, OTAG ND National Guard: Testified in support. #1185, #1186, #1187.

Arik Spence, Chamber of Commerce: Testified in support.

John MacMartin: Testified via Zoom in support. #1156

Senator	Attendance
Chairman Schaible	P
Senator Elkin	P
Senator Conley	P
Senator Lemm	P
Senator Oban	P
Senator Wobbema	P

Additional written testimony:

Berry Wilfahrt, #1140

Linda Inman, USFA, #1127

Jim Nelson, Legis Council, #1093

Chair Schaible: Any more testimony? Seeing none, the hearing is closed.

Adjourned at 3.22 p.m.

Lynn Wolf, Committee Clerk

January 18, 2021



North Dakota Senate

State Capitol
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505-0360

Senator
Scott Meyer
District 18
1624 Seventh Avenue North
Grand Forks, ND 58203-3010
218-791-7655
scottmeyer@nd.gov

Committees:
Finance and Taxation
Government and Veterans
Affairs

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Education Committee, SB 2175 is the 2nd bill dealing with Military Spouse Licensure Reciprocity and is meant to correct a few issues that were caught with the passing of SB 2306 last legislative session.

Some history as to why we are here, The Department of Defense has recently taken a stronger stance on quality of life initiatives for military members and their families. Quality education and licensure portability are two metrics that have been prioritized when the DOD considers base realignment, base retention, and for strategic basing decisions. SB 2306 accomplished many of our goals, but the DOD came back wanting us to address 43-51-11.1, Section 1, Subsection A of Century Code.

In attached email correspondence, Mr. Jason Vandenberg, Chief of the Airman and Family Care Division at the Pentagon, scored this section as “yellow” because of the following language:

“Which must include experience in the occupation or profession for at least two of the four years preceding the date of application under this section”

Their reasoning was that military members and their spouses could be PCS’d or transferred multiple times over four years or they may be stationed overseas, thus creating a barrier for licensure.

We removed that language while still allowing the boards to ensure occupational competency through their methods and standards.

I have attached a second email from Mr. Vandenberg to Barry Wilfhart, the Grand Forks Chamber President, after he had a chance to review the draft of SB 2175, and he believes the removal of the above language addresses their concerns of the requirement of 2 of the preceding 4 years.

Mr. Vandenberg also stated:

“There are many ways to remove barriers to support the desired outcome of quick, efficient, military spouse career portability, the use of expedited licensing and recognition of licenses from other jurisdiction are two great pathways that I see in your proposed legislation.”

Mr. Chairman, we've also defined Military Member in SB 2175. The reason for this was to clear any ambiguity from the passage of SB 2306 and to make sure military members and spouses are both included for licensing portability. Military members are required to maintain their license status. Additionally, it's another opportunity for our state to assist as military members separate from service and transition into their civilian career. Many Veterans are highly skilled employees and the state benefits by retaining these skilled employees to help fill workforce needs. However, these military members still have to qualify for all the licensure provisions that were passed in SB 2306.

Finally, you'll notice in section 5 and section 6, two different reporting requirements. Section 5 deals with the gathering of data for the Department of Defense. Each state provides data to the DOD every November regarding Education, Workforce Issues, etc. It will help identify what seems to be working well or if there are any issues that need to be addressed.

Section 6 is similar to SB 2306 as it is one report to determine whether the laws and rules are consistent with this act.

As of August, 2020, there have been 58 military spouses that received a license in their occupation and only one received a provisional license. This tells me that our boards are doing a great job on licensing, and this bill shouldn't affect much. The passage of SB 2175 is meant to help get our state into the Green ranking with the Department of Defense.

The road to perfection is always under construction, but this bill addresses the concerns of Mr. Vandenberg, keeps assisting workforce development, and also provides valuable data for the state.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Education committee, I ask for a favorable recommendation and I'll stand for any questions.

From: Bruce Gjovig <bruce@gjovig.net>
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 5:19 PM
To: Sheldon, Jay G MAJ USARMY NG NDARNG (USA)
Cc: Meyer, Scott; Linda Inman
Subject: : Support of Military Families. - Base Rankings

***** CAUTION: This email originated from an outside source. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know they are safe. *****

Jay,

Barry Wilfahrt, GF Chamber President, had a phone conversation with the Jason Vandenberg (address below) on License Portability rankings for ND. He told Barry the reason that North Dakota scored a "yellow" was because of Section 6 of SB 2306 which says, "The military spouse demonstrates competency in the occupation or profession through methods or standards determined by the board which much include experience in the occupation or profession for at least two of the four years preceding the date of application under this section; and"

That caveat of active practice for 2 of 4 years before the application was the sole reason the yellow rating. In his estimation, if that language was removed, we would be rated "green." I hope that is true. On the sheet from the USAF for Grand Forks AFB, Minot, and National Guard, the footnote does note "the 2/4 years before application.

I have copied Sen. Meyer on this email to see if that is "doable."

Bruce

Mr. Jason Vandenberg
Chief, Airman and Family Care Division
Headquarters, Air Force
Pentagon 4D1054
302.310.0596 (telework)
jason.vandenberg@us.af.mil

From: "VANDENBERG, JASON T GS-15 USAF HAF AF/AF/A1SA"
<jason.vandenberg@us.af.mil>
Date: January 11, 2021 at 10:25:17 AM CST
To: Barry Wilfahrt <barry@gochamber.org>
Subject: RE: (Sen. Meyer) Relating to occupational licensure of members of the military and military spouses – LC# 21.0565.02000

Thanks for the note Mr. Wilfahrt—

Thanks again for taking the time this summer to discuss ways that we could further partnerships between the Air Force and your community regarding licensure portability for military spouses.

I have reviewed the proposed legislation and believe Section 4, 1.A removes our previous area of concern of the requirement for licensure in 2 of the preceding 4 years in the jurisdiction military spouses were relocating from.

There are many ways to remove barriers to support the desired outcome of quick, efficient, military spouse career portability, the use of expedited licensing and recognition of licenses from other jurisdiction are two great pathways that I see in your proposed legislation.

Thanks for continuing this discussion and let me know if you have any further questions!

V/r
Jason

Mr. Jason Vandenberg
Chief, Airman and Family Care Division
Headquarters, Air Force Services
Pentagon 4D1054
302.310.0596 (telework)

TESTIMONY OF
MAJOR JAY SHELDON
NORTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
BEFORE THE
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
18 JANUARY 2021
SENATE BILL 2175

Good afternoon Chairman Schaible, members of the committee, I am Jay Sheldon, Strategy and Policy Officer for the North Dakota National Guard. I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 2175.

Today I represent the Office of the Adjutant General and all of the military members and their families that today and in the future refer to North Dakota as “home”. As we strive to continue supporting the advancement of North Dakota as military friendly state this bill does two important things. It broadens the scope to include military members and it provides for an annual report.

We must remain competitive in order to retain our current military missions. As highlighted by a 2018 letter from the Secretaries of Army, Navy and Air Force clearly indicates, state’s support to its military families will be a factor in any future basing decisions. Retaining our current military footprint has been billion-dollar injection into our state’s economy over the past few years.

With two active-duty Air Force Bases, a large National Guard presence, along with Army, Navy and Marine Corps reserve units in our state, the 2019 North Dakota Military Economic Impact Analysis reported that there are over 11,000 serving military members in North Dakota with nearly 13,000 dependents, about 3% of the state’s population. This small segment of the population has a big impact and positions us to be a leader in providing a military friendly environment.

Annually about 1,900 transition into Minot and Grand Forks and approximately 300 Airmen exit the Air Force due to retirement with North Dakota being their final duty station. By including military members, you include individuals as they transition from a full-time military career to a civilian career and you include traditional (part-time) National Guard and Reserve members seeking employment in North Dakota.

Instead of military families departing North Dakota after their service, if the spouse is employed and the military member sees a smooth transition and opportunities for employment, we should strive to be the state that these families continue to call home. The ability to remain employed and gain employment encourages them to stay. Although the workforce shortage is not currently as severe as it was just a couple years ago, either of these groups could fill various skilled labor shortages around the state.

From the law passed last session a valuable document emerged, the Clear Report. This report was a result of the Department of Commerce and Workforce Development Councils role in conducting a survey as required in SB 2306. What we learned is that our licensing boards had been and continue to do a phenomenal job. At the time of the report 58 military spouses were granted occupational licenses and only one of them required a provisional license as result of the 30-day limit. This concluded that the timeliness of issuing licenses was obviously not a problem in North Dakota but led to a useful and obvious conclusion: that data and information sharing are important. Hence, the annual reporting requirement in SB 2175. The data generated from regular reporting will be useful for future policy makers.

Senate Bill 2175 goes beyond support to our military, by also providing a workforce recruitment and retention tool to fill critical jobs and grow North Dakota's economy. The bill does not ask professional licensure boards to blindly grant licenses. Instead, it provides consideration, given the unique circumstances involving military spouses and military members to reduce barriers to employment and encourages retention of military families in North Dakota.

I ask for your support of SB 2175 and will stand by for any questions that you may have.

Office of the Secretary of the Navy
1051 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-1051

Office of the Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0101

Office of the Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

FEB 23 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

SUBJECT: Consideration of Schools and Reciprocity of Professional Licensure for Military Families in Future Basing or Mission Alternatives

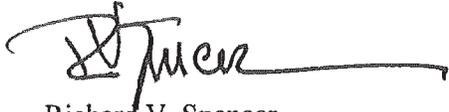
Thank you for your support of our men and women in the military. We are often asked what communities can do to support those who serve. While focus on the mission is always our priority, the factors military families cite most frequently as drawbacks to military service include military dependent's difficulty assimilating into local school systems following a duty station transfer, the quality of schools available for their children, and the ability of spouses to obtain jobs and sustain careers. With that in mind, we will encourage leadership to consider the quality of schools near bases and whether reciprocity of professional licenses is available for military families when evaluating future basing or mission alternatives.

Military families relocate frequently. The services endeavor to schedule transfers to minimize impact on the academic year, but this is not always possible. As a result, incoming students face difficulties transferring credits between school systems, adjusting to varied curriculum, and joining sports teams or clubs after the start of the school year. Exclusion from extra-curricular activities is particularly challenging for our military children, as they are critical to social development and self-esteem. Some school systems recognize this and accommodate military families during transfers. These schools should be commended and emulated.

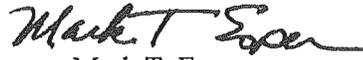
Facilitating military spouses in continuing their work in a new place of residence without delays or extra expense is also important. Spouses in professionally licensed fields such as medical, legal, engineering, education, accounting, or the cosmetic arts face challenges due to delays or cost of transferring licenses to a new state or jurisdiction. Eliminating or mitigating these barriers will improve quality of life for our military families, and ease the stress of transferring duty stations with consideration for long-term career implications.

We realize improving schools and changing laws or regulations regarding professional licensure will take time. Over the long term, however, leaders who want to make a difference for the military and our missions will make the most impact if we focus on what matters. Reciprocity on licensure and the quality of education matter.

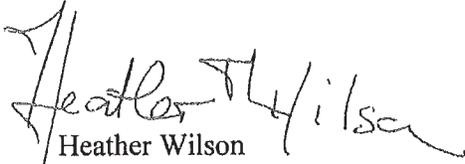
Thank you for your help and attention. We look forward to continuing to work with you and thank you again for your support of our men and women in the military.



Richard V. Spencer
Secretary of the Navy



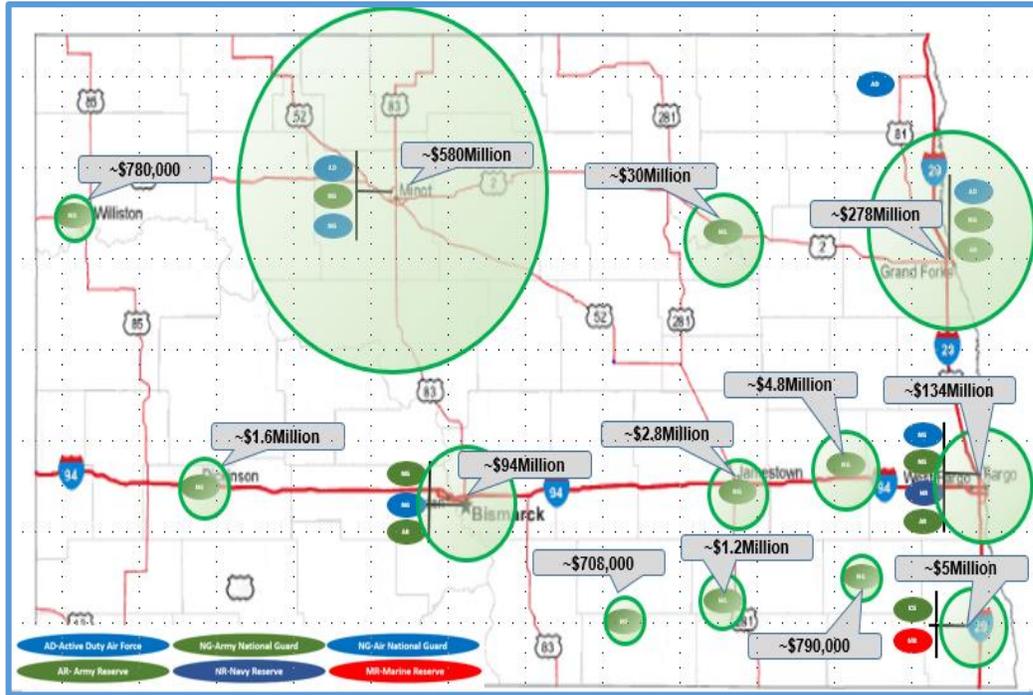
Mark T. Esper
Secretary of the Army



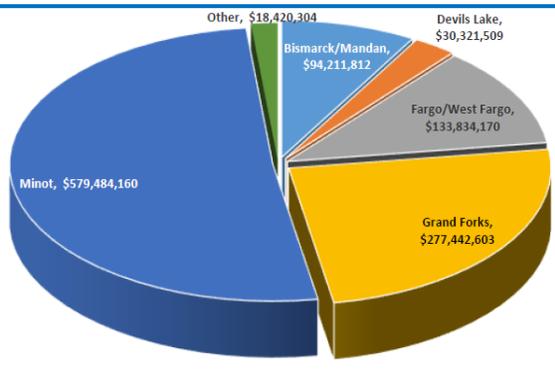
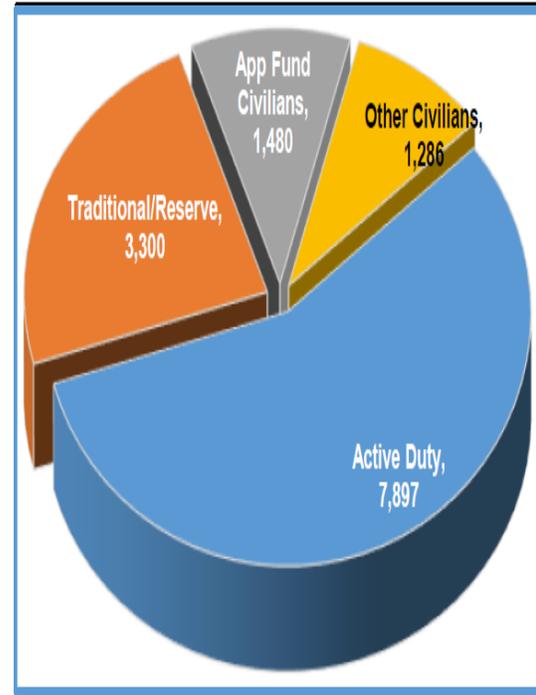
Heather Wilson
Secretary of the Air Force

North Dakota Military FY19 Economic Impact Data

Economic Impact By Location.



Military Employees by type – 13,963

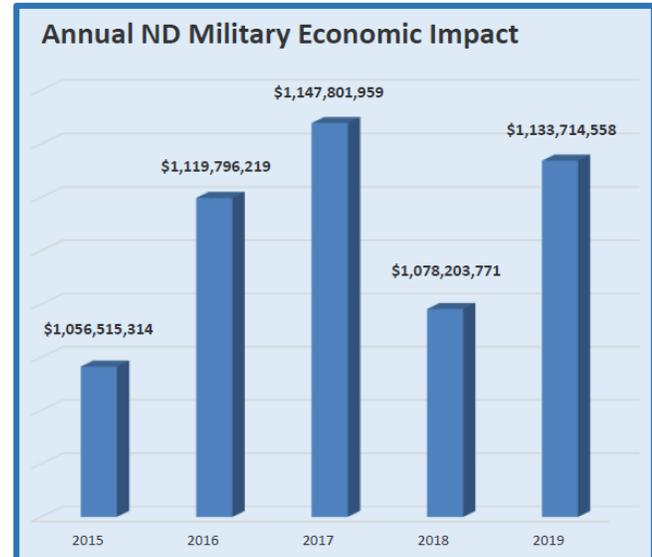
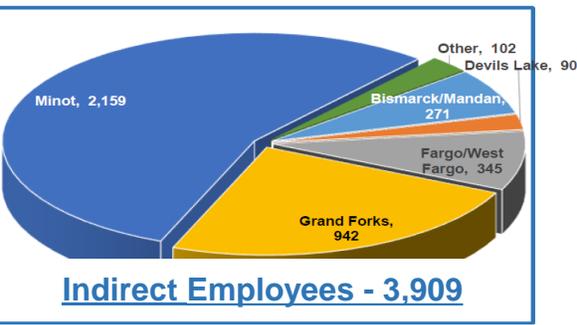
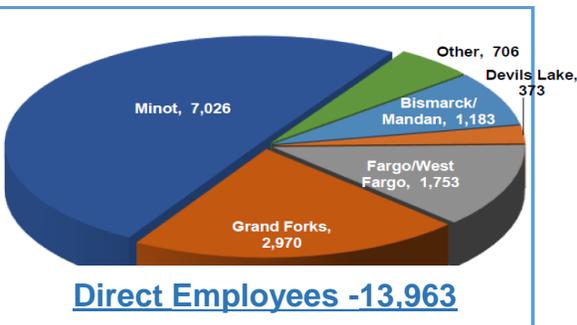
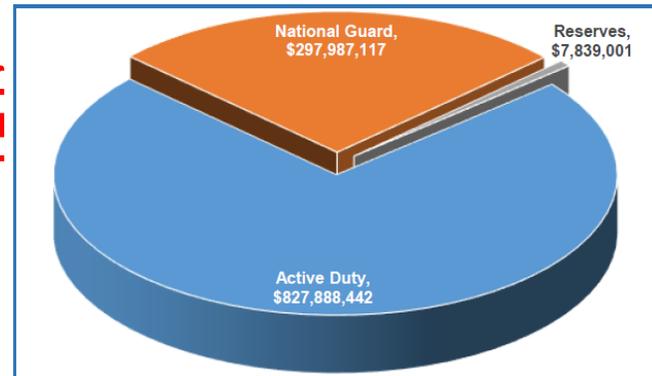


Economic Impact

• Approx. \$1.13 B

Consider these #s

- \$719M - annual payroll for military employees
- \$191M - indirect salaries
- \$233M – for construction, services, materials, equipment and supplies
- 26.9k people directly associated with the military
- 11.6k serving members
- 12.9k dependents



January 18, 2021
Testimony of L John MacMartin
SB 2175

Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee I am John MacMartin, the President of the Minot Area Chamber EDC. I am here to provide testimony in support of SB 2175.

Last session groups came together to pass legislation that would change how occupational licensure was handled for members of the military and their spouses. SB 2175 proposes technical corrections to the state law that was created in 2019. These corrections will more favorably position North Dakota when viewed by the Department of Defense as being Military friendly.

Again I ask for your support of SB 2175.

L John MacMartin, CCE
President
Minot Area Chamber EDC
701-857-8203



202 N. 3rd Street
Grand Forks, ND 58203

P.O. Box 315
East Grand Forks, MN 56721

p: 701-772-7271
f: 701-772-9238

www.gochamber.org

The Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Chamber of Commerce Supports SB 2175.

The US Secretary of the Air Force made it very clear in a letter last year to all 50 Governors; future-basing decisions for all future missions will include a quality of life component. In her letter in bold letters, she said and I quote:

“We will encourage leadership to consider the quality of schools near bases and whether reciprocity of professional licenses is available for military families when evaluating future basing or mission alternatives.

GFAFB contributes over \$250M a year to the Grand Forks regional economy according to their annual economic impact report. So it is clear why this is important to the local community.

From a business community perspective: Workforce remains our number one challenge with over 1,500 jobs open on a continuous basis in Grand Forks County alone. This Bill will help us do a better job capturing this military spouse talent pool.

Thank you Senator Meyer for working to balance the interests of business, military families and the health and welfare of the people of North Dakota.

As a chamber and community, we support this Bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Barry Wilfahrt'.

Barry Wilfahrt
President & CEO
The Chamber Grand Forks/East Grand Forks

For SB 2175 Military Members/Spouses Licensing Reciprocity

TO Senate Education Committee, January 18, 2021 3 pm

From: Linda Inman, RN MS Grand Forks - U.S. Air Force Air Mobility Command Civic Leader, Working Group Member of the Grand Forks Region Base Retention and Investment Committee, linman@gra.midco.net **218-791-6408**

Thank you for your time. As members of the Senate Education Committee you will hear SB 2175 which improves and enhances SB 2306 passed last session. With a favorable consideration, this bill will impact the existing and future basing missions at Grand Forks AFB, Cavalier AS, Minot AFB and our National Guard which— in part - depend on licensing reciprocity and portability. This bill is very important as it takes North Dakota from Yellow to **Green** on future basing decisions regarding licensing portability.

In an effort to reduce your amount of reading, suffice it to say that I wholeheartedly agree with SB 2175 testimony submitted by my colleague Bruce Gjovig.

Thank you again for your favorable consideration, you are appreciated!

#1093

The North Dakota Veterans Legislative Council is in support of this legislation and urges your yes vote Thank you

2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee
Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2175
1/25/2021

COMMITTEE WORK: A BILL relating to occupational licensure of members of the military and military spouses; and to provide for a report.

Chair Schaible called Committee work to order at 2:41 p.m.

Discussion Topics:

- Committee action on bill

Sen Wobbema: I move a Do Pass

Sen Elkin: I second.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 Motion Passed

Sen Wobbema will carry the bill.

Adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

Lynn Wolf, Committee Clerk

Senator	Attendance
Chairman Schaible	P
Senator Elkin	P
Senator Conley	P
Senator Lemm	P
Senator Oban	P
Senator Wobbema	P

Senator	Vote
Chairman Schaible	Y
Senator Elkin	Y
Senator Conley	Y
Senator Lemm	Y
Senator Oban	Y
Senator Wobbema	Y

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2175: Education Committee (Sen. Schaible, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2175 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2021 HOUSE EDUCATION

SB 2175

2021 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

SB 2175
3/3/2021

Relating to occupational licensure of members of the military and military spouses; to provide for a report

Chairman Owens opened the hearing at 2:30 PM. Roll call: Reps. Owens, Schreiber-Beck, Heinert, Hoverson, D. Johnson, M. Johnson, Longmuir, Marschall, Pyle, Richter, Zubke, Guggisberg and Hager present. Rep. Simons was absent.

Discussion Topics:

- Military member recruitment

Sen. Scott Meyer introduced SB 2175

Sen. Randy Burkhard

Jay Sheldon, Officer of the Adjutant General, Advisor, #7192

Amanda Remyse, Greater North Dakota Chamber

Rep. Longmuir motioned for a **Do Pass**, seconded by **Rep. Marschall**.

Roll Call Vote:

Representatives	Vote
Representative Mark S. Owens	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Ron Guggisberg	Y
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	Y
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Jeff A. Hoverson	Y
Representative Dennis Johnson	AB
Representative Mary Johnson	Y
Representative Donald Longmuir	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Brandy Pyle	Y
Representative David Richter	Y
Representative Luke Simons	AB
Representative Denton Zubke	Y

Motion Carried 12-0-2 **Rep. Heinert** is the carrier

Additional written testimony: #7264, #7258, #7074

Chairman Owens closed the hearing at 2:45 PM

Bev Monroe, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2175: Education Committee (Rep. Owens, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (12 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2175 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.

TESTIMONY OF
MAJOR JAY SHELDON
NORTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
BEFORE THE
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
03 MARCH 2021
SENATE BILL 2175

Good afternoon Chairman Owens, members of the committee, I am Jay Sheldon, Strategy and Policy Officer for the North Dakota National Guard. I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 2175.

Today I represent the Office of the Adjutant General and all of the military members and their families that today and in the future refer to North Dakota as “home”. As we strive to continue supporting the advancement of North Dakota as military friendly state this bill does two important things. It broadens the scope to include military members and it provides for an annual report.

We must remain competitive in order to retain our current military missions. As highlighted by a 2018 letter from the Secretaries of Army, Navy and Air Force clearly indicates, state’s support to its military families will be a factor in any future basing decisions. Retaining our current military footprint has been billion-dollar injection into our state’s economy over the past few years.

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Annually about 1,900 transition into Minot and Grand Forks and approximately 300 Airmen exit the Air Force due to retirement with North Dakota being their final duty station. By including military members, you include individuals as they transition from a full-time military career to a civilian career and you include traditional (part-time) National Guard and Reserve members seeking employment in North Dakota.

Instead of military families departing North Dakota after their service, if the spouse is employed and the military member sees a smooth transition and opportunities for employment, we should strive to be the state that these families continue to call home. The ability to remain employed and gain employment encourages them to stay. Although the workforce shortage is not currently as severe as it was just a couple years ago, either of these groups could fill various skilled labor shortages around the state.

From the law passed last session a valuable document emerged, the Clear Report. This report was a result of the Department of Commerce and Workforce Development Councils role in conducting a survey as required in SB 2306. What we learned is that our licensing boards had been and continue to do a phenomenal job. At the time of the report, 58 military spouses' received occupational licenses and only one of them required a provisional license as result of the 30-day limit. This concluded that the timeliness of issuing licenses was obviously not a problem in North Dakota but led to a useful and obvious conclusion: that data and information sharing are important. Hence, the annual reporting requirement in SB 2175. The data generated from regular reporting will be useful for future policy makers.

Senate Bill 2175 goes beyond support to our military, by also providing a workforce recruitment and retention tool to fill critical jobs and grow North Dakota's economy. The bill does not ask professional licensure boards to blindly grant licenses. Instead, it provides consideration, given the unique circumstances involving military spouses and military members to reduce barriers to employment and encourages retention of military families in North Dakota.

I ask for your support of SB 2175 and will stand by for any questions that you may have.



March 3, 2021
House Education Committee
SB 2175

Katie Ralston, Director of Workforce Division, ND Department of Commerce

Hello, Chairman Owens and members of the House Education Committee. My name is Katie Ralston, and I have served as the director of the workforce division at the North Dakota Department of Commerce since January 2020. In my role, I also have the great pleasure of serving as the director of the industry-led Workforce Development Council. I'm here to share some information related the report to Commerce listed in SB 2175.

In the 66th Legislative Assembly, SB 2306 included that licensing boards and commissions must submit a report to the Department of Commerce by August 2020. We leveraged a subcommittee of the Workforce Development Council made up of legislators and a cross-functional group of representatives of those affected by North Dakota's occupational licensing framework, including the business community and populations with barriers to employment, such as those with criminal backgrounds, displaced workers, and the military. The goal of this workgroup was to remove unnecessary barriers to employment while preserving the health and safety of North Dakota citizens and promoting competition. To accomplish this, the workgroup studied North Dakota's schema for occupational licensing in order to develop a thorough understanding of licensing in our state; discover best practices; engage licensing boards and commissions; and identify the best path for reform. Finally, to fulfill the task of collecting a report from each licensing board required to comply with SB 2306, we contracted with the Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR). Over the course of seven months, this effort revealed the impact of SB 2306, and uncovered unique and effective practices already being utilized by our boards, while also helping us identify opportunities for future refinement.

One opportunity identified through our work is to grant military members the same ease in obtaining a license to practice through expedited application processing or the issuance of a provisional license or temporary permit if an application cannot be processed within a 30-day timeframe, similar to what military spouses have experienced starting in 2019. The survey administered by CLEAR asked boards how many military spouses have identified themselves as such on their license application, and at the time of the survey, 58 applicants had done so and

only one was issued a temporary permit as his/her application could not be processed in the 30-day timeframe. We were encouraged to see that North Dakota's licensing boards responded quickly in getting military spouses licensed to practice. Throughout the last two years, we know that there were some military members who applied for licensure in North Dakota, and it's important that they receive the same level of expedited service.

The challenge with a one-time survey is that our results are a snapshot of a moment in time. Continuing to track the number of military members and spouses who receive licenses under the auspices of SB 2175 will help us understand the impact of our reform efforts and will improve North Dakota's military-friendly status, making it a desirable place for active and retired military families. Occupational licensing reform is an ongoing process and the annual report stated in this bill will help us understand the landscape of licensure in North Dakota and identify evolving opportunities.

Thank you for entrusting the Department of Commerce with the task of collecting this valuable information from our licensing boards. I appreciate the opportunity to speak today and am happy to answer any questions you may have.

For SB 2175 Military Members/Spouse Licensing Reciprocity

TO House Education Committee, March 3, 2021

From: Bruce Gjovig, Grand Forks - Member of the Grand Forks Mayor's Base Mission Committee, U.S. Air Force Civic Leader (Appointee of USAF Chief of Staff) Bruce@Gjovig.net [701-739-3132](tel:701-739-3132)

SB 2175 improves and enhances SB 2306 passed last session and together the bills are: 1) good law for fairness for military members and trailing military spouses in the service of our country, 2) important law for our military to retain a highly trained military force, 3) essential law to keep and attract missions at our Grand Forks and Minot Air Force Bases, and 4) good law for our workforce.

SB 2175 accomplishes 4 important objectives:

- 1) **Removes the ambiguity** from the 2019 law that the bill includes both military spouses AND military members in professional licensing reciprocity. Many military members also have professional licenses esp. in the areas of engineering and healthcare professions.
- 2) **Removes the requirement** that the military spouse have **professional practice in two of the last four years**. This requirement turned out to be unworkable for military members serving abroad where host nations do not recognize Stateside professional licensing, have jobs available, or do not offer work visas. They were being unfairly excluded through no fault of their own while serving our nation.
- 3) **Requires data collection annually** on military members/spouses to demonstrate to the Dept. Of Defense successful licensing reciprocity/portability, and collects data during the biennium to see if additional issues need to be addressed in an upcoming Legislative session. This should require no more than a half hour of reporting time for each of the licensing boards and commissions.
- 4) **Removes the concerns and objections of DOD** which ranks each state on licensing reciprocity/portability for military member and spouses. USAF Headquarters in the Pentagon reviewed **SB 2175** on Jan 11th and reported the bill removed the barriers and concerns they previously had which gave us a **yellow** rating (caution, some barriers exist) in 2020 and will move ND to **green** rating (no concerns or barriers). Removing the barriers and concerns enables new missions and mission enhancements at the Grand Forks, Cavalier and Minot Air Force bases as well as the National Guard where we compete nationally with other states.

The Air Force recruits airmen and retains military families. Our **Air Force** needs to **retain highly trained airmen** and **National Guard** members working with nuclear missiles, bombers, ISR, sensors, data analytics, cyber security, international communications, and maintenance on complex technical systems – these are highly trained specialists needed to secure and protect our nation. How do we retain essential airmen?

Airmen will stay in the military to serve our country, providing their spouses also have a rewarding career. ***Our airmen's commitment to their country should not conflict with their commitment to their family.*** Too frequently service members retire or leave the service

because the toll on their family is too heavy, not because they want to leave the military. This bill provides a remedy.

The critical need to retain highly trained military members is why the three U. S. Service Secretaries (Air Force, Army & Navy) sent a letter to all Governors on February 23, 2018 outlining ways state leadership can better support our service members. The letter stated: “**We will encourage state leadership to consider the quality of schools near bases and whether reciprocity of professional licenses is available for military families when evaluating future basing or mission alternatives.**”

Existing and future basing missions at Grand Forks AFB, Minot AFB and our National Guard will – in part - depend on licensing reciprocity and portability. This bill takes North Dakota from Yellow to Green on future basing decisions. North Dakota wants to support our military members and missions.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that 22% of all workers required a government license to do their job in 2019, while **35% of military spouses** in the labor force work in occupations requiring a license or certification.

The Grand Forks AFB welcomes about 450 new airmen each year, and Minot AFB welcomes about 1,500 new airmen – as their predecessors move to another assignment or promotion.

Military spouses attain more education than civilians of working age, as approximately 30% of the U.S. working age population has a college degree, while **40% of military spouses do.**

Nationally, 63% of military spouses report they encountered difficulties with licensing in their last move. That is from a 2016 survey by **Blue Star Families**, a national nonprofit aimed at helping military families who surveyed 8,390 families in 2016 and 10,192 families in 2018. Nationally 54% of airmen are married (69% of the officers and 51% of enlisted), and 20% of airmen are assigned overseas with many of their spouses stateside working and maintaining their families. In 2018, **70% encountered challenges in maintaining required licensure/certification.** *Finding a job is one of the top stressors of military families.*

A top stress for a military family is **financial stress, caused by problems in spousal employment.**

Last, but not least, our military is of vital importance to our state. The Military employs about 14,000 people and created another 3,874 indirect jobs in North Dakota. Annual payroll for military employees is approximately \$700 Million and indirect salaries totaled \$190 million The military also has direct expenses for construction, services, materials, equipment and supplies in the amount of \$270 Million. The total economic impact in North Dakota is estimated at about \$1.2 Billion. These figures illustrate how devastating a base closure, or a missed mission, would be for our economy.

Thank you for your favorable consideration.

Committee Members

The North Dakota Veterans Legislative Council Supports this bill and urges your passage of this legislation.

Jim Nelson Legislative Director and President of NDVLC