

TESTIMONY OF
MAJOR JAY SHELDON
NORTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
BEFORE THE
HOUSE INDUSTRY, BUSINESS, AND LABOR
19 JANUARY 2021
HOUSE BILL 1278

Good morning Chairman Lefor, 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 House Bill 1278.

I am here speaking on behalf of the Office of the Adjutant General as well as all of the military members and families that today and in the future will refer to North Dakota as "home". This bill primarily affects the active-duty Air Force and active duty recruiter's stationed around the State. House Bill 1278 supports state-wide efforts to advance North Dakota as military friendly State.

A 2018 letter from the Secretaries of Army, Navy and Air Force clearly indicates, state support to its military families will be a factor in any future basing decisions.

According to the Fiscal Year 2019 Military Economic Impact Analysis, there were about 7,300 active duty members, of which approximately 1,900 transition into North Dakota annually. The military members have over 7,000 dependents, of which includes many spouses. Many of them will be searching for employment before or upon arriving in North Dakota. This benefit would provide time to settle into their new surroundings and seek employment with reduced stress.

North Dakota remains just one of two states that does not authorize unemployment compensation for military spouses when they leave employment due to a military forced relocation. This benefit coupled with the military spouse occupational licensing law passed last session, will remove stress from military families transitioning to North Dakota.

The always looming, but not currently imminent prospect of a Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC), motivates us to remain competitive in order to retain our current military missions which over the past few years have provided a billion-dollar infusion into the North Dakota economy. House Bill 1278 is another way to show that we value our military families in the State and their service to our nation.

I ask for your support of HB 1278 and will stand by for any questions that you may have.