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**TESTIMONY OF  
LONNIE GRABOWSKA  
DIRECTOR  
NORTH DAKOTA BUREAU OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION  
BEFORE THE 68<sup>th</sup> LEGISLATIVE SESSION  
SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
JANUARY 27, 2023  
IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2016**

Chairman Sorvaag, members of the Senate Appropriations Education and Environment Committee Division, my name is Lonnie Grabowska, Director of the North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI). Please accept my supporting testimony to the Watch Center concept in Senate Bill 2016. I believe that a 24/7 capability that brings together continuous threat monitoring, assessment and alerting is long past due in the state. Not only will the citizens of the state benefit, but the BCI will benefit as well.

The North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation will benefit from a 24/7 state emergency watch center in a variety of ways. The proposed watch center will be able to provide statewide situational awareness and intelligence and information sharing through its proactive monitoring of open-source and dark web data for potential threats in or to North Dakota. This monitoring will also provide real time information sharing for ongoing or future criminal activities. For example, the awareness and combined reporting of hoax bomb threats or "swatting" incidents in the state help to inform our agents and law enforcement stakeholders. All-hazards threat monitoring, assessment and alerting is also invaluable during prolonged law enforcement operations such as the NODAPL protests. I believe we would also improve the work life balance of BCI agents who are often notified of events after hours that are not applicable to our agency's core mission due to the lack of a vetting and assessment capability. A watch center can provide that.

A primary benefit to BCI of having a 24/7 watch center is more efficient coordination when analyzing and sending out the public alerts that BCI and the ND Highway Patrol jointly approve. Currently, the on-call duty officer at the Department of Emergency Services can vary greatly in experience and capability. A limited but dedicated cadre of watch officers would ensure consistency and accuracy in these time sensitive events while reducing the time it takes to issue an alert. In this use case, saving time can literally save a life. The watch center would also provide the ability to scan the multiple sources of information regarding the missing person to ensure accurate information is being reported and to further inform state and local law enforcement of the ongoing situation.

The North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation believes in proactive information and intelligence sharing, which is why we endorse the establishment of a 24/7 state watch center. Such a center would greatly enhance our ability to gather information, provide initial assessments, and respond more quickly and effectively to criminal activities that occur within the state. This enhances public safety for our citizens and can reduce costs by providing faster, more targeted response measures when necessary. Last, but something that should not be overlooked, is the opportunities for collaboration that a 24/7 capability would bring to the state in amplifying efforts to combat human trafficking, missing persons, and drug overdoses. While we have not yet begun to synchronize efforts or technologies in those areas, we realize that crime does not stop at 5 o'clock central time so neither should we. I thank you for your support and the opportunity to provide the committee testimony.