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February 1, 2025

RE: Testimony in Support of House Bill 1504

Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Finance and Taxation Committee:

My name is Kristina Brownell, and I represent Community Action Region VI (CAP Region 6). We provide statewide healthcare navigation services under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, ensuring that Veterans experiencing homelessness can access the critical medical care they need to regain stability.

I am writing in strong support of HB 1504, which directs 50% of the gaming tax paid by Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) to be deposited into the Post War Trust Fund or the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs grant program. This funding will directly support essential services for Veterans, including housing stability, medical navigation, and supportive services that help prevent and address homelessness among those who have served our country.

For many Veterans experiencing homelessness, healthcare access is a major barrier to regaining stability. Without proper medical care, chronic health conditions go untreated, mental health challenges worsen, and the ability to secure long-term housing becomes nearly impossible. Through SSVF's Healthcare Navigation program, CAP Region 6 helps Veterans enroll in VA healthcare and other medical coverage, schedule and coordinate medical appointments, and connect with critical mental health and substance use treatment. By ensuring they receive necessary care, we are giving them a real path toward stability.

HB 1504 ensures that more resources are directed to support programs like ours, which work daily to prevent Veteran homelessness. By supporting HB 1504, this committee has the opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of North Dakota's Veterans. Directing gaming tax revenue from VSOs into the Post War Trust Fund and Veterans Affairs grant programs is an investment that ensures our state continues to prioritize the well-being, housing, and healthcare access of those who have served our country.

I strongly urge you to support HB 1504 and the ongoing efforts to provide Veterans with the stability and care they deserve. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristina Brownell
Executive Director