

69TH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Testimony Senate Bill 2135 Senate Industry and Business Committee January 15th, 2025

**Submitted by: Ken Wangen,
Fire Chief, Carrington Fire Department,
President, North Dakota Fire Chiefs Association**

Chairman Warrey and the House Industry, Business and Labor Committee

Please accept my testimony in support of the proposed legislation to amend and reenact subsection 2 of section 18-04-04 and section 18-05.1-02 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the firefighter's death benefits fund.

I do not have any numbers referring to how many times the Line of Duty death benefit has been accessed since its inception, respectfully North Dakota only has 20 names on its Fallen Fire Fighter memorial in Garrison spanning from 1907 to date, so thankfully it is not a high use benefit and with the grace of God will continue to be that. But rest assured it is a very important benefit for the families that experience the loss of a loved one in the line of duty.

To me, as a fire fighter with over 30 years of service this legislation to increase the benefit amount to a survivor of a firefighter line of duty death is important to my family and friends, as the fire chief for the Carrington Fire Department it is reassuring to know that in the worst of times the family of a fallen fire fighter will have help, As the president of the Chiefs Association I can confidently say the increase would very much be appreciated by all Fire Services in the state.

This benefit is not one that gets much attention or notice but is extremely important to the family of the firefighter. We as fire fighters all too often are exposed to the general public's worst day, and without question do our duty to make it better despite how it affects us. This benefit relieves short term concerns for the family in ways our fire fighters cannot.

Please fully consider this legislation to increase the death benefit from \$10,000 to \$25,000. I along with the North Dakota Fire Chiefs Association respectfully request a Do Pass on SB 2135.

Sincerely,

Ken Wangen
Fire Chief Carrington Fire Department
President North Dakota Fire Chiefs Association