



Testimony prepared for the Senate Human Services Committee
HB 1338 – Military status in child abuse and neglect allegations
March 11, 2025
Kim Jacobson, Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone Director

Chair Lee, and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, my name is Kim Jacobson. I serve as the Director of Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone, which includes the counties of Traill and Steele, and as President of the North Dakota Human Service Zone Director Association. I am here today to testify in support of HB 1338.

Human service zones serve as the legal designee for completing suspected child abuse and neglect assessments (commonly known as CPS). Our work begins with receiving reports of suspected child abuse or neglect by our centralized intake team. This team then dispatches the report appropriate for further assessment to the CPS team of the local human service zone. Upon receipt of the report, the zone commences a fact-finding process called an assessment. When the assessment is concluded, the case is staffed with the CPS worker, their supervisor, and a state CPS Field Service Specialist issue a determination if the legal definition of child abuse or neglect can be substantiated.

House Bill 1338 is related to CPS reports that involve military-affiliated individuals along with notification requirements. Currently, Ward and Grand Forks have a memorandum of understanding in place between their respective human service zones and military installation base. However, North Dakota does not have a statewide agreement, and we recognize that military affiliated individuals can be located across our state.

The North Dakota Human Service Zone Director Association engaged with the bill sponsor and various military officials to amend the original bill. Areas of clarification and definition were adopted. To ensure consistent practice, our Association supports a statewide policy agreement as suggested in HB 1338.

To support compliance with this law, a question could be added during the CPS Central Intake processes. We can also create a process ensure appropriate zone action if military affiliation is learned after the intake stage. This is not anticipated to pose an excessive administrative burden and would support consistent operational processes.

Thank you for consideration of my testimony. I urge a “do pass” on HB 1338. I stand for questions from the committee.