

TESTIMONY ON HB 1389
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2023

Chairman Weisz and members of the Human Services Committee, I am Susie Schlecht, the Admissions Coordinator at the North Dakota Veterans Home. I am here today to testify in favor of the proposed changes to Bill 1389.

In the role, I serve, it has been a privilege to share about the North Dakota Veterans Home with veterans across the state. On more than one occasion, I have visited with veterans who have shared that they are not eligible to reside at the North Dakota Veterans Home as they do not meet the definition of a veteran in 37-01-40. These veterans are enrolled in Veterans Affairs healthcare and have percentages of service-connected disability ratings through Veterans Affairs healthcare.

I would like to share a specific example of a veteran interested in admission to the North Dakota Veterans Home who is not eligible:

Veteran A: Veteran A served in the Navy for five months and 27 days and had an honorable discharge. His length of service does not meet the requirements under 37-01-40. Veteran A has an 80% service-connected disability rating through the VA Medical Center. As he is enrolled in VA healthcare, the North Dakota Veterans Home would receive a per diem if he was eligible for admission to the North Dakota Veterans Home.

If the identified changes are made in lines 10-15 in Bill 1389 the North Dakota Veterans Home and veterans would both benefit. From a marketing viewpoint, we would be able to share with County Veteran Service Officers the update to the bill so they could share the information with veterans in their county who were previously ineligible for residency at the North Dakota Veterans Home.

The per diem that the North Dakota Veterans home receives for veterans enrolled in VA Healthcare helps to offset costs to our facility. Helping Veterans and being fiscally minded about our state's great resources will be met with the proposed changes. It is an honor to serve our heroes and the citizens who ensure they are well cared for. Thank you, Rep. Hanson, for supporting this bill change. Thank you, Chairman Weisz and committee members, for your time.