

Representatives Tveit, Fegley, Hauck, Headland, Koppelman, Schatz, Thomas Senators Luick, Myrdal, Weston, Wobbema A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new subdivision to subsection 2 of section 62.1-02-05 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon at a public gathering. BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

SECTION 1. A new subdivision to subsection 2 of section 62.1-02-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

An individual who: (1) Served in the armed forces of the United States on federal active duty, or served in the national guard or a reserve unit located within North Dakota;
(2) Was honorably discharged from the armed services, national guard, or a reserve unit; and
(3) Possesses a valid class 1 firearm and dangerous weapon license issued by the attorney general under section 62.1 - 04 - 03.

Chairman Porter and Representatives of the Committee, my name is John Gruenberg, Superintendent from Underwood Public School and ND Army National Guard Veteran of 10 years. During my service to the ND National Guard, I was deployed with A Co. 164th ENG BN out of Minot, ND from November 2005 to November 2006 as a combat engineer. We were tasked with finding IEDs and roadside bombs in an area just north of Baghdad. Within my military training before and during deployment, my weapons training included proficiency with the M-16, the M203 grenade launcher, the AT-4 rocket launcher, the MK-19 40mm grenade launcher, the .50 cal mounted machine gun, and lastly, a measly 9-mm pistol. All of these weapons systems have their purpose when deployed to a hostile area under the duress of combat. That purpose is the ability to use deadly force when needed to protect my brothers and sisters who were out on mission with me on a daily basis.

In my opinion, my experience in the ND Army National Guard as a combat engineer does not give me the knowledge and training to be allowed to carry and conceal that measly 9-mm pistol with a class 1 firearm license in a public place, especially a school. The class 1 firearm license includes classroom instruction, an open book test, demonstration of familiarity with a firearm, and the completion of a shooting or certified proficiency exercise.

HB 1194 would allow an honorably discharged military veteran with a class 1 firearm license to carry in a public place, including a school. What it doesn't include is the same expectations of ND Century Code article 62.1-02-14. - The Armed first responder in schools. An Armed First Responder must go through a litany of requirements that include being a retired law enforcement officer or successfully complete the course established by the private investigative and security board, a criminal background check, a physical and mental health evaluation, completion of faculty and administrator safety training and emergency response courses, annual training and recertification courses that consist of a minimum of ten hours of instruction and a skills evaluation assessment. The licensed individual is also identified to local law enforcement and cooperates with them in their annual training that includes active shooter exercises and lockdowns.

All of the requirements for the Armed First Responder in Schools make sense as it gives that individual as much information, training, and proficiency needed for them to be prepared to make the right decision if or when the time comes. Being a military veteran doesn't give you that training. An open book test with weapon familiarity doesn't give you that training. Our schools are meant to be a place of the utmost safety for our communities, our staff, and our students. Why allow an individual with minimal training to conceal a dangerous weapon when there are already other more viable options for our schools. With that, I would request that this committee recommends a Do Not Pass on HB 1194. I will stand for any questions or comments, thank you.