



North Dakota House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Representative Matthew Ruby

District 40
1400 Golden Valley Lane
Minot, ND 58703-1192
C: 701-509-8149
mruby@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:
Human Services
Energy and Natural Resources

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Good morning Chairman Luick, Vice Chairman Myrdal, and Committee,

My name is Matt Ruby and I have the honor to represent District 40 in the ND House of Representatives. HB 1182 is a bill that would create a \$50 stipend for a Veteran Service Organization that performs one of the 5 parts of a military Veteran's funeral. Currently the North Dakota Army National Guard provides the honors for Army veterans and the other branches cover their own. In most areas there is a VSO that also provide honors. When I was a team leader in the Military Funeral Honors Program covering the northwest quadrant of the state, we typically provided the folding of the U S Flag and the presentation to the family but it's not uncommon for us to play TAPS with a recorded version that is played from an insert that goes inside a bugle as well. The VSO typically provides the 3 Volley Salute, the playing of TAPS when they can and present the state coin to the family. The Department of the Army will provide a \$50 stipend if the VSO plays a live bugle at an Army veteran's funeral only, but there are only a handful of VSOs across the state that have someone that plays live TAPS. South Dakota created a stipend program to help cover down for the other branches and for those VSOs that don't have a live bugler and the intent is that we would model our program after theirs. About 60% of the roughly 1275 veteran funerals across the state in the last year were Army and a very small portion of those qualified for the stipend from the department of the Army. This isn't a big amount per funeral but it goes a long way to help pay for transportation, uniforms and training so a veteran gets the proper final respect they deserve.