2023 HOUSE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

HB 1326

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Government and Veterans Affairs Committee
Pioneer Room, State Capitol

HB 1326
1/26/2023

Relating to department of veterans' affairs access to information.

Chairman Schauer called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

Chairman Austen Schauer, Vice Chairman Bernie Satrom, Reps. Landon Bahl, Claire Cory, Jeff A. Hoverson, Jorin Johnson, Karen Karls, Scott Louser, Carrie McLeod, Karen M. Rohr, Vicky Steiner, Steve Vetter, Mary Schneider. All present.

Discussion Topics:

- Suicide prevention
- Targeted action in other states
- Amendment (23.0385.01001)
- Committee action

Representative Cory introduced HB 1326 spoke in support of and proposed an amendment, (23.0385.01001) (#16859)

Lonnie Wangen, Commissioner of the Government and Veterans Affairs Committee, spoke in support of the bill. (#16839)

Representative Vetter moved to amend HB 1326. (23.0385.01001)

Seconded by Representative Steiner.

Lonnie Wangen answered questions from the committee.

Roll Call Vote:

Representatives	Vote
Representative Austen Schauer	Y
Representative Bernie Satrom	Y
Representative Landon Bahl	Y
Representative Claire Cory	Y
Representative Jeff A. Hoverson	Y
Representative Jorin Johnson	Y
Representative Karen Karls	Y
Representative Scott Louser	Y
Representative Carrie McLeod	Y
Representative Karen M. Rohr	Y
Representative Mary Schneider	Y
Representative Vicky Steiner	Y
Representative Steve Vetter	Y

Motion carries: 13-0-0.

Representative Vetter moved a DO PASS as amended.

Representative Schneider seconded.

Roll call vote:

Representatives	Vote
Representative Austen Schauer	Y
Representative Bernie Satrom	Y
Representative Landon Bahl	Y
Representative Claire Cory	Y
Representative Jeff A. Hoverson	Y
Representative Jorin Johnson	Y
Representative Karen Karls	Y
Representative Scott Louser	Y
Representative Carrie McLeod	Y
Representative Karen M. Rohr	Y
Representative Mary Schneider	Y
Representative Vicky Steiner	Y
Representative Steve Vetter	Y

Motion carries: 13-0-0.

Bill carrier: Representative Cory

Chairman Schauer adjourned the meeting at 3:50 PM.

Phillip Jacobs, Committee Clerk By: Leah Kuball

Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for
Representative Cory
January 24, 2023

JJ 1-26-23

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1326

Page 1, line 1, after "A BILL" replace the remainder of the bill with "for an Act to amend and reenact subsection 2 of section 23-02.1-27 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to access to death records.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT. Subsection 2 of section 23-02.1-27 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

2. A certified copy of a complete death record may be issued to a relative, an authorized representative, the child fatality review board, a licensed physician, or a genetic sibling for the purposes of researching family medical history, a funeral director reporting the facts of death, the commissioner of veterans' affairs for a death record of an individual designated as having served in the United States armed forces, or a person with personal or real property interests that depend upon information contained in the complete death record or by the order of a court of competent jurisdiction and may include the cause of death and the social security number. A certified copy of the facts of death record that includes the facts of death and the social security number may be issued to any person that may obtain a certified copy of a complete death record or to any licensed attorney who requires the copy for a bona fide legal determination. A certified copy of an informational death record may be issued to the general public, but the copy may not contain the cause of death or the social security number."

Renumber accordingly

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1326: Government and Veterans Affairs Committee (Rep. Schauer, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS** and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1326 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 1, line 1, after "A BILL" replace the remainder of the bill with "for an Act to amend and reenact subsection 2 of section 23-02.1-27 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to access to death records.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

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Renumber accordingly

2023 SENATE AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

HB 1236

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee
Fort Union Room, State Capitol

HB 1326
3/10/2023

A bill relating to access to death records.

9:45 AM Chairman Luick called the meeting to order. Members present: Chairman Luick, Vice Chairman Myrdal, Senator Lemm, Senator Hogan, Senator Weston, Senator Weber.

Discussion Topics:

- Death record access
- Death certificates
- Patterns of suicide deaths
- Confidential records

9:45 AM Representative Claire Cory, North Dakota Legislature, District 42, Grand Forks, North Dakota, introduced HB 1326 and testified in favor. #23436

9:47 AM Lonnie Wangen, Commissioner, North Dakota Veterans Affairs, testified in favor of HB 1326. # 22193

10:00 AM Darin Meschke, ND Registrar of Vital Records, testified regarding definitions of vital records. No written testimony.

Additional testimony:
Michelle Gauvin-Panos #23555

10:07 AM Chairman Luick closed the hearing on HB 1326.

10:08 AM Senator Hogan moved DO PASS HB 1326. Senator Weston seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Senators	Vote
Senator Larry Luick	Y
Senator Janne Myrdal	Y
Senator Kathy Hogan	Y
Senator Randy D. Lemm	Y
Senator Mark F. Weber	Y
Senator Kent Weston	Y

Vote: 6-0-0- DO PASS HB 1326

Senator Hogan will carry the bill.

10:11 Chairman Luick adjourned the meeting.

Brenda Cook, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1326, as engrossed: Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee (Sen. Luick, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed HB 1326 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

TESTIMONY

HB 1326

HB 1326 North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs 1/26/2023
Lonnie Wangen-Commissioner

House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee
68th Legislative Session
Representative Schauer -Chair

Chairman Schauer and House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee,

Please accept this testimony in support of HB 1326.

Intent of this bill…

Suicide Prevention among Veterans

- Allow ND Department of Veterans Affairs access to the death records of ND Resident Veterans and Military members.
  - Records can be reviewed for patterns or opportunities to target prevention measures.

Need for bill…

- The national average for veteran & military suicides have been at 22 per day. Current research shows that that number has dropped to 20. Many states are taking targeted action.
- ND Veteran Suicides. Source: ND Vital Records

Death Year	Under 35	AGE 35 TO 54	AGE 55+	Total
2017	11	10	10	31
2018	6	5	9	20
2019	5	6	11	22
2020	8	9	12	29
2021	5	3	12	20
2022	5	8	6	19
Total	40	41	60	141

Organizations working to prevent ND Veteran Suicides:

- Governor's Challenge
- ND HOPES (Healthcare, Opportunity, Prevention, and Education in Suicide prevention)
- ND CARES
- Cass Clay Suicide Review Commission
- VA Suicide Prevention Program

Outcome of Bill…

- Reduce suicide among ND Veterans with "Targeted" suicide prevention.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lonnie Wangen Commissioner-NDDVA

Legislative Assembly

North Dakota
House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360

#16859

Representative Claire Cory
District 42
P.O. Box 5094
Grand Forks, ND 58206-5094
C: 701-213-6553
clairecory@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:
Judiciary
Government and Veterans Affairs

Chairman Schauer and House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee,

For the record my name is Claire Cory and I represent District 42 in Grand Forks.

This bill came to my attention by the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs. It is needed to obtain records to conduct a thorough review for any patterns or opportunities which may help prevent suicides among ND Veterans. Currently, only the number of North Dakota suicides with military history is available.

I would appreciate the opportunity to present an amendment to House Bill 1326. This amendment simplifies the bill by adding the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs for a death record of an individual designated as having served in the United States armed forces to the list of 8 persons or entities who are currently allowed a certified copy of a complete death record.

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee, this concludes my testimony and I am happy to answer any questions.

HB 1326 North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs 3/10/2023
Lonnie Wangen-Commissioner

Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee
68th Legislative Session
Senator Luick -Chair

Chairman Luick and Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

Please accept this testimony in support of HB 1326.

Intent of this bill…

Suicide Prevention among Veterans

- Allow ND Department of Veterans Affairs access to the death records of ND Resident Veterans and Military members.
    - Records can be reviewed for patterns or opportunities to target prevention measures.

Need for bill…

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Some organizations working to prevent ND Veteran Suicides:

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Outcome of Bill…

- Reduce suicide among ND Veterans with "Targeted" suicide prevention.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lonnie Wangen Commissioner-NDDVA

Legislative Assembly

North Dakota
House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360

#23436

Representative Claire Cory
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COMMITTEES:
Judiciary
Government and Veterans Affairs

March 10, 2023

Chairman Luick and Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee Members,

For the record, my name is Claire Cory. I represent District 42 in Grand Forks, which includes the northwestern part of Grand Forks and expands out to include the Grand Forks Air Force Base. I am here as the prime sponsor seeking support of House Bill 1326.

The need for this bill came to my attention from the Veterans Affairs Commissioner. It would allow the Veterans Affairs Commissioner to have access to vital records so he can look for patterns in units to do targeted suicide prevention.

In your handout you will find an amendment that I am asking you to consider. This amendment is a one word change as follows: On page 1, line 19, replace “record” with “certificate”.

Chairman Luick and members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee, this concludes my testimony. I respectfully ask for a do pass recommendation from your committee. I am happy to stand for any questions.

"Supporting those who served."

10 March 2023

Chairman Luick and Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

I am Michelle Gauvin-Panos, Executive Director of ND Cares and I submit this testimony in support of House Bill 1326, allowing the commissioner of veterans' affairs access to death records of an individual designated as having served in the United States armed forces.

ND Cares is also the organization leading the North Dakota state team in the Governor's Challenge to Reduce Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families. The North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs and the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services are integral members of that team. We are working directly with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration on priority initiatives in several areas.

One important initiative is to obtain more detailed vital records data for military related deaths, whether they are active duty or veterans, for the purposes of analyzing that data, identifying trends, and deploying multi-agency intervention strategies to reduce further suicides.

Concerning trends could include a number of suicides among service members or veterans of the same era of military service, deployment in the same region, shared experiences, concentrations of suicides in specific areas of the state or among a specific industry.

As an example, last year there were four suicides of energy-industry workers in the northwest part of North Dakota. Much later, it was discovered that they were all veterans. Had this trend been spotted early, potentially life-saving prevention measures could have been administered in the area.

According to the ND Vital Records Department data prepared for ND Cares, there were approximately 141 military related (active duty and veterans) suicides in North Dakota between 2017 and 2022. Working together we can reduce this number in the future – but we require the information to do so.

ND Cares urges the committee to pass HB1390 and allow the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs access to records that will ultimately help save lives.

Respectfully,

Michelle Gauvin-Panos
Executive Director
ND Cares
Office of the Adjutant General
North Dakota National Guard