

TESTIMONY OF
MAJOR JAY SHELDON
NORTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
BEFORE THE
HOUSE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
19 JANUARY 2023
HOUSE BILL 1182

Good morning, Chairman Schauer, members of the committee, I am Jay Sheldon, Strategy and Policy Officer for the North Dakota National Guard (NDNG). I am here today to testify in support of House Bill 1182

The NDNG supports the establishment of a state sponsored Military Funeral Burial Stipend that is like programs that exist in Minnesota and South Dakota. We have worked closely with Rep. Matt Ruby and Commissioner Wangen in the preparation of this bill.

The NDNG manages a federally funded Military Funeral Honors program which can provide a stipend to Veteran Service Organizations (VSO). However, our program has limited funds and rules that restrict who is eligible for the stipend. Under these rules the NDNG can only provide the stipend for Army funerals that has a live bugler.

These rules significantly reduce the number of VSOs eligible to receive a stipend. The program being proposed would authorize a stipend for congressionally chartered VSOs that provide the key elements of honor for members of all branches of service and regardless of how the honor of Taps is performed. VSOs would NOT receive both a state and federal stipend.

We feel this stipend, although minimal, will ensure that appropriate honors are provided to eligible military members in the future.

I ask for your support of HB 1182 and will stand by for any questions that you may have.