

2025 Engrossed Senate Bill No. 2046
Testimony before the House Industry, Business & Labor Committee
Presented by Anne Jorgenson Green, Workforce Safety and Insurance
March 5, 2025

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: My name is Anne Green with Workforce Safety & Insurance (WSI). I am here today to provide testimony regarding Engrossed Senate Bill No. 2046. The WSI Board supports this bill.

SECTION 1:

In 2024, WSI participated in an executive branch military friendliness working group to identify ways to support military and veteran citizens in North Dakota. What resulted is this proposed new section to Title 65 which provides support to a new, military member or veteran-owned business. Under this proposal, any active member of the North Dakota national guard or a veteran defined under North Dakota law is eligible for a workers' compensation premium credit of up to \$250.

WSI chose a credit in the amount of \$250 because this is the minimum premium charge for workers' compensation coverage in North Dakota and is the typical premium paid by a substantial number of small business owners. Practically, this proposal gives a veteran or military member with at least fifty percent ownership in a new business, a \$250 break on their workers' compensation premium during the first year of that business' operation.

The Engrossed Bill includes a surviving spouse of a veteran as a recipient of this premium credit.

SECTION 2:

This proposed amendment is responsive to future technology changes at WSI. WSI is in the process of updating its major business technology applications. This is a large, multi-year initiative with multiple releases. One of the goals of updating WSI's technology is to streamline information processes to and from external stakeholders and partners. While we are not there yet, we anticipate this functionality before the 2027 legislative session. As a result, we want to address the statute at this time.

Under current law, WSI is required to send appealable decisions by regular mail. The proposed change will provide WSI with the authority to electronically issue decisions in the dispute resolution process for employers when the technology updates allow us to do so. The definition of "electronic means" and similar changes to the injured employee dispute resolution statute are proposed in 2025 SB 2109, WSI's injury services bill.

WSI believes electronic delivery will improve accuracy and timeliness. A recipient will have the option to receive electronic notifications and WSI will electronically track and confirm receipt of the notification. We look forward to this upgrade in our technology.

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.