



North Dakota House of Representatives

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Representative Jeremy Olson

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House Majority Caucus Leader

COMMITTEES:

Finance and Taxation
Energy and Natural Resources

14 March 2025

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

I am Jeremy Olson, State Representative, District 26, representing most of McKenzie and Dunn Counties.

I am the prime sponsor for HB 1169 as part of the Military and Veteran's Caucus's goal of protecting the benefits and quality of life for our active duty members and veterans in North Dakota.

HB 1169 aims to protect our disabled veterans from predatory practices of some organizations whose business model is to assist disabled veterans to receive disability compensation but use unethical methods against the veteran for this service. There are respectable organizations who truly do good work to help our disabled veteran community, as well as our local Veteran Service Officers (VSOs), as they navigate the often-complex system of the Veteran's Affairs disability claims system.

This bill aims to shield veterans from unethical practices while ensuring they have the freedom to choose how and from whom they receive assistance.

For example, the main provisions of HB 1169 protect veterans from excessive fees, misuse of private information, and false promises of success. The proponents following me can give you a more granular perspective of the challenges and solutions that HB 1169 addresses.

This bill received questions in the House chamber based on a misunderstanding that these organizations are required to be accredited by the VA. The private companies this bill addresses do not practice law, do not represent the veteran before the VA, and do not act as the veteran's agent of record. Therefore, they do not need to be accredited, which would require offering their services for free, essentially ending their ability to operate in North Dakota. Including an accreditation requirement would nullify the bill's purpose.

Without this bill, however, North Dakota's code lacks clear guidelines on what constitutes acceptable practices when assisting veterans with their claims. Again, our goal is to ensure veteran choice while protecting their interests.

I humbly ask for a do pass recommendation and thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeremy L Olson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "J" and "O".

Jeremy L Olson MBA, CSP

ND House of Representatives, District 26

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