



VETERANS GUARDIAN VA CLAIM CONSULTING

The Honorable Larry Luick, Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Veterans Affairs
North Dakota Legislative Council
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505

Dear Chairman Luick and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is John Blomstrom, and I am here on behalf of Veterans Guardian, where I have the privilege of helping Veterans secure the benefits they have earned. I am also a United States Marine Corps Veteran who has personally navigated the VA claims process, experiencing firsthand the delays, frustration, and roadblocks that too many of our nation's heroes face when seeking the support they deserve. Beyond my work and my service, I also come before you as someone with deep midwestern farming and ranching roots. My family still operates a working ranch here in the Dakotas.

I understand the values of personal responsibility, freedom of choice, and ensuring that our Veterans are not left behind. That's why I am here today to urge you to support HB 1169, the SAVE Act—Safeguarding American Veteran Empowerment. Veteran Choice is at the Heart of this Debate at its core, this bill is about Veteran choice—protecting the right of those who served to seek out the best assistance for their individual needs.

In a Free Market State like North Dakota, Veterans deserve the freedom to choose who helps them navigate the VA system, whether that's a Veterans Service Organization (VSO), a private consultant, or an attorney.

Unfortunately, the VA disability process is a bureaucratic and difficult system to navigate, and presents challenges to most Veterans, often resulting in deserving Veterans not receiving the benefits to which they are entitled. In fact, there are more than 18 million Veterans in America, but only 5 million have a disability rating. While actors such as VSOs and law firms also serve Veterans, more options, not less, are needed to effectively meet the demand of American Veterans. I am proud of the work my company has done to support the benefits ecosystem and assist Veterans with this process.

Veterans Guardian employs a staff of more than 75% Veterans, spouses of Veterans, spouses of active-duty service members or immediate family members of veterans. We have been recognized by the Department of Labor by receiving the HIRE Vets platinum or gold award four years in a row. We have received the BBB Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics in 2020, 2021,