

2025 HOUSE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

HB 1148

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

GOVERNMENT VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

PIONEER ROOM, STATE CAPITOL

HB 1148

1/16/2025

A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 1-03 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to military appreciation month.

9:04 a.m. Chairman Schauer opened the hearing.

Members present: Chairman Schauer, Representatives Bahl, Brown, Christy, Grindberg, Karls, McLeod, Rohr, Schneider, Steiner, VanWinkle, Vetter, Wolff

Members absent: Vice Chairman Satrom

Discussion Topics:

- Recognition for veterans

9:05 a.m. Representative Frelich, District 15, introduced the bill and submitted testimony #29433.

9:07 a.m. Jason Pierce, Commander of VFW Post 756, testified in favor and submitted testimony #29497.

9:15 a.m. Joe Hall, North Dakota Veterans Legislative Counsel, testified in favor and submitted testimony #29387.

9:18 a.m. Lonnie Wangen, North Dakota Department of Veteran's Affairs, testified in favor and submitted testimony #29392.

9:21 a.m. Chairman Schauer closed the hearing.

9:21 a.m. Representative McLeod motioned Do Pass.

9:21 a.m. Representative VanWinkle seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Austen Schauer	Y
Representative Bernie Satrom	AB
Representative Landon Bahl	Y

Representative Collette Brown	Y
Representative Josh Christy	Y
Representative Karen Grindberg	Y
Representative Karen Karls	Y
Representative Carrie McLeod	Y
Representative Karen Rohr	Y
Representative Mary Schneider	Y
Representative Vicky Steiner	AB
Representative Lori VanWinkle	Y
Representative Steve Vetter	Y
Representative Christina Wolff	Y

9:22 a.m. Motion passed 12-0-2

Representative McLeod will carry the bill.

Additional written testimony:

Mark Jorritsma submitted testimony in favor #28877.

9:22 a.m. Chairman Schauer closed the meeting.

Jackson Toman, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1148 ([25.0102.01000](#))

Government and Veterans Affairs Committee (Rep. Schauer, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (12 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1148 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.



Kathy Frelich

Representative District 15

701-351-0719

kfrelich@ndlegis.gov

Devils Lake, ND 58301

Chairman Schauer and Members of the Government and Veteran Affairs Committee,
For the record, my name is Kathy Frelich, and I am honored to be here representing District 15.

The idea for HB 1148 was brought to me by a constituent and he'll be up here shortly to share his own testimony but let me first walk you through this very short and sweet Bill.

HB 1148 designates the Month of May as Military Appreciation Month. Each year, the Governor will issue a proclamation on May 1st in honor of our Military men and women.

When I first approached Legislative Council regarding this Bill, it was to draft a Resolution, however in learning that resolutions are only binding for one year, I decided to move this in a different direction. As a Resolution, the legislative assembly would be required to pass a similar resolution each session if they wanted to maintain it. This Bill will codify Military Appreciation Month in North Dakota's Century Code. The wording is similar to Women Veterans' Month, which is in March.

I believe we cannot do enough to show appreciation to our Military members who serve to protect our freedom and our families, and I hope you will concur.

I will stand for questions, but before that I would like to tell you about my constituent.

Jason Pierce is the Commander of VFW Post 756 in Devils Lake ND. He is a retired veteran with 20 years of service to this great nation and 11 years to this great state. He joined the Active-Duty Air Force in 1993 and was stationed at the Grand Forks Air Force Base. He served on active duty for 3 years and after his honorable discharge, he moved back home and joined the Pennsylvania Air national guard in 1996. In 2005 Jason enlisted in the ND army National Guard and served for 11 years. He served all over the world including, Japan, England, France, Italy, Abu Dhahbi, and a year in Baghdad Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Thank you for welcoming Jason Pierce, but before he takes the podium, I will stand for questions.

Military Appreciation Month

Chair Schauer and Committee members; my name is Joe Hall with the NDVLC.

I am here to testify in favor of House Bill 1148.

Veterans deserve our respect for serving our country. Many have risked their lives to protect us and our freedoms. Veterans have and are still playing an integral role in the shaping of our world along with our country, as we know it today.

Veterans have committed years of their lives to serving and protecting our country. Many veterans continue to serve long after leaving the military. In their communities and on a national level. You don't have to look very far to see veterans still serving. These men and women served and are still serving with selflessness as volunteers, mayors, legislators, mentors, lawyers, police officers the list goes on. Many still bear the heavy burden and scars of their service on behalf of the United States. Thousands face physical and mental challenges and many struggle to fit in and adjust to civilian life. The sacrifices made by them and their families during their time in service should never be forgotten. We should always remember and honor them not just on veteran's day but every day. It is our duty to never forget their contributions and sacrifices. As a nation it is our moral obligation to support them and their families.

In 1863 Abraham Lincoln wrote in a letter "Honor the Soldier, and Sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country's cause" and during his second inaugural address he said, "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan". This state affirmed the government's responsibility to care for those injured in war and the families of those who died. This statement is the mission statement for the Department of Veterans affairs to "care for those who have served in our nation's military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors". Currently there are almost 30 National Monthly awareness programs; the Passage of this bill would greatly enhance our commitment and duty to never forget our veterans by allowing communities along with the state to be able to shine a spotlight on the sacrifices, challenges, and contributions of our veterans. The NDVLC supports this bill and asks for a do pass vote.

HB 1148

North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
Lonnie Wangen-Commissioner

1/16/2025

House Government and Veterans Affairs-Committee
69th Legislative Session
Representative Schauer-Chair

Chairman Schauer and House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee,

Please accept this testimony in support of HB 1148.

Intent of this bill:

Establish the Month of May as “Military Appreciation Month”.

Need for bill:

- As per congressional action in 1999: Each year, the president makes a proclamation reminding Americans of the important role the U.S. Armed Forces have played in the history and development of our country. May was chosen because it has many individual days marked to note our military's achievements, including
 - Loyalty Day May 1 (since 1921)
 - Victory in Europe (VE) Day commemorating the end of WWII in Europe in May 8, 1945
 - Children of Fallen Patriots Day (May 13)
 - The anniversary of the death of Osama bin Laden (May 2, 2011)
 - Arlington National Cemetery was founded May 13, 1864.
 - Memorial Day: Observed the last Monday in May, Memorial Day honors those who lost their lives while in service to the United States during peace and war.
 - Military Spouse Appreciation Day: The Friday in May before Mother's Day, this special day was first recognized by President Ronald Reagan in 1984.
 - Armed Forces Day: On Aug. 31, 1949, Defense Secretary Louis Johnson announced the creation of an Armed Forces Day to replace separate Army, Navy and Air Force Days. The single-day celebration stemmed from the unification of the armed forces under one agency -- the Department of Defense.

Outcome of bill:

North Dakota would

Thank you for your consideration.

Lonnie Wangen Commissioner-NDDVA

Chairman Schauer, members of the Government and Veterans Affairs committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak this morning.

My name is Jason Pierce. I am here in support of House Bill No.1148. I believe the state of North Dakota has been, and continues to be, a state whose National Guard Soldiers set the standard and have served, and will continue to serve, the great state of North Dakota, and nation, with honor, sacrifice, and dignity.

As of June 2024, The North Dakota National Guard had around 4,200 service members. That number continues to grow, and God willing, will continue to produce brave men and women who understand the importance of service over self. These dedicated Soldiers and Airmen of our great state spend countless hours in training, and executing the training in which they

receive, which results in time away from their families which can be days, months, and even years. Without fail, they are there to serve, **volunteering to serve**, *and that is honorable*. I know firsthand, as my fellow brothers and sisters in uniform do, the feeling of missing children's birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays during our service to this state and country.

We don't do this for a thank you or appreciation. A military member will never expect a thank you for what they do or have done, they do it because it is the right thing to do.

However, when I approached District 15 Representative Kathy Frelich in regard to putting together this Bill, it was the now Civilian side of me that wanted to thank every single service member, both National Guard and Active duty, from the state of North Dakota for their selfless service.

Twice a year we celebrate our veterans and mourn the loss of those who lost their lives in the line of Duty, but we as citizens of this great state do not get the chance to recognize those who are still serving our state and nation.

When duty calls for help during a flood, our citizen soldiers answer the call. The number of North Dakota National Guard members who have served on flood duty varies depending on the situation but can be in the hundreds or thousands. For example, in 2011, more than 3,000 North Dakota National Guard members served on flood duty.

When Governor Burgum called upon the North Dakota National Guard for support during the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) protests in 2016, around two dozen soldiers were deployed to the site and 100 more were placed on standby to provide security and administrative support.

Hundreds of our states Guard Soldiers have been called to serve on the southwest boarder and even in air defense at our nation's capital. Also, many Soldiers from my city of Devils Lake have been called to serve in Ghana in a partnership that the ND National Guard has with that nation. These are but a few examples that when our State calls, our brave Soldiers and Airmen answer that call.

I have yet to mention those North Dakotans that have made the ultimate sacrifice. Just to give you an idea of the service and sacrifice of our state's brave servants, these are the numbers of those who gave their lives in support of our nation according to the VA:

Philippine Insurrection: 17

World War I: over 1300

World War II: 1626

Korea: 177

Vietnam: 199

Lebanon: 1

Panama: 1

Gulf War: 1

Iraq: 15

Afghanistan: 7

Our Brave men and women from North Dakota deserve an entire month, where we as a State, show our appreciation for all that they do. So, I humbly ask for your support in passing HB 1148.

Thank you for your time.



Testimony in Support of House Bill 1148

Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director
North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action
January 16, 2025

Dear Chairman Schauer and honorable members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee,

My name is Mark Jorritsma and I am the Executive Director of North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action. I am testifying on behalf of our organization in support of House Bill 1148 and respectfully request that you render a "DO PASS" on this bill.

HB 1148 is a relatively straightforward but important bill that would ensure that each year, our governor proclaims May as Military Appreciation Month. We fully support honoring our men and women who previously served and currently serve in the military. The incredible sacrifices and commitment made by them in the defense of our country and its values cannot be overstated. Speaking personally, my father served in the military, as well as many relatives on both sides of our family. We greatly respect their service and devotion. In addition, there is biblical foundation for protecting one's family and country, and it is made quite plain to us by Christ himself that, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13, KJV)

For the above reasons, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action requests that you render a "DO PASS" on HB 1148. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony, and feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Mark Jorritsma
Executive Director
North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action

2025 SENATE AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

HB 1148

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee

Fort Union Room, State Capitol

HB 1148
2/21/2025

A bill relating to military appreciation month.

10:01 a.m. Chairman Luick opened the hearing.

Members present: Chairman Luick, Vice-Chair Myrdal, Senator Marcellais, Senator Weston, Senator Weber

Discussion Topics:

- Month of May and Memorial Day
- Governor proclamation
- Military appreciation and sacrifice
- Military members currently serving
- Flood duty, Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) protests, and the Nation's southwest border
- Government responsibility

10:02 a.m. Representative Kathy D. Frelich, District 15, testified in favor and submitted testimony #38272.

10:04 a.m. Jason P. Pierce, resident from Devils Lake, ND, testified in favor and submitted testimony #38229.

10:10 a.m. Jim Nelson, Legislative Director of the ND Veterans Legislative Council, testified in favor and submitted testimony #38320.

10:13 a.m. Lonnie Wangen, Commissioner of the ND Department of Veterans Affairs, testified in favor and submitted testimony #38321.

10:15 a.m. Chairman Luick closed the hearing.

10:15 a.m. Senator Myrdal moved a Do Pass.

10:15 a.m. Senator Weston seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed 6-0-0.

Senator Myrdal will carry the bill.

Additional written testimony:

Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director of ND Family Alliance Legislative Action, submitted testimony #37787 in favor.

10:16 a.m. Chairman Luick closed the hearing.

Audrey Oswald, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1148 ([25.0102.01000](#))

Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee (Sen. Luick, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1148 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.



Testimony in Support of House Bill 1148

Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director
North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action
January 21, 2025

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

My name is Mark Jorritsma and I am the Executive Director of North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action. I am testifying on behalf of our organization in support of House Bill 1148 and respectfully request that you render a "DO PASS" on this bill.

HB 1148 is a relatively straightforward but important bill that would ensure that each year, our governor proclaims May as Military Appreciation Month. We fully support honoring our men and women who previously served and currently serve in the military. The incredible sacrifices and commitment made by them in the defense of our country and its values cannot be overstated. Speaking personally, my father served in the military, as well as many relatives on both sides of our family. We greatly respect their service and devotion. In addition, there is biblical foundation for protecting one's family and country, and it is made quite plain to us by Christ himself that, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13, KJV)

For the above reasons, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action requests that you render a "DO PASS" on HB 1148. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony, and feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Chairman Luick, members of the Agriculture and Veterans Affairs committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak this morning.

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receive, which results in time away from their families which can be days, months, and even years. Without fail, they are there to serve, **volunteering to serve**, *and that is honorable*. I know firsthand, as my fellow brothers and sisters in uniform do, the feeling of missing children's birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays during our service to this state and country.

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Thank you for your time.



North Dakota House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Representative Kathy Frelich

District 15
8827 54th St. NE
Devils Lake, ND 58301
kfrelich@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:

Vice Chair Human Services
Transportation

Chairman Luick and Members of the Agricultural and Veteran Affairs Committee,

For the record, my name is Kathy Frelich, and I am honored to be here representing District 15. The idea for HB 1148 was brought to me by a constituent and he'll be up here shortly to share his own testimony but let me first walk you through this very short and sweet Bill.

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When I first approached Legislative Council regarding this Bill, it was to draft a Resolution, however in learning that resolutions are only binding for one year, I decided to move this in a different direction. As a Resolution, the legislative assembly would be required to pass a similar resolution each session if they wanted to maintain it. This Bill will codify Military Appreciation Month in North Dakota Century Code. The wording is similar to Women Veterans' Month, which is in March.

I believe we cannot do enough to show appreciation to our Military members who serve to protect our freedom and our families, and I hope you will concur. I will stand for questions, but before that I would like to tell you about my constituent.

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Thank you for welcoming Jason Pierce, but before he takes the podium, I will stand for any questions.

HB 1148

Military Appreciation Month

Veterans deserve our respect for serving our country. They risked their lives to protect us and our freedoms. Veterans have, and are still playing an integral role in the shaping of our world along with our country, as we know it today.

Veterans are among the most important members of our society. They have committed years of their lives to serving and protecting our country. Many veterans continue to serve long after leaving the military. In their communities, on a national level. You don't have to look very far to see veterans still serving. These men and women served and are still serving with selflessness as volunteers, mayors, legislators, mentors, lawyers, police officers the list goes on.

Many still bear the heavy burden and scars of their service on behalf of the United States. Thousands face physical and mental challenges and many struggle to fit in and adjust to civilian life.

The sacrifices made by them and their families during their time in service should never be forgotten. We should always remember and honor them not just on veteran's day but every day. The contributions made by veterans are priceless. Not only is it our duty to never forget their contributions and sacrifices. As a nation it is our moral obligation to support them and their families.

In 1863 Abraham Lincoln wrote in a letter “Honor the Soldier, and Sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country’s cause” and during his second inaugural address he said “to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan”. This state affirmed the government’s responsibility to care for those injured in war and the families of those who died. This statement is the mission statement for the Department of Veterans affairs to “care for those who have served in our nation’s military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors”.

The Passage of this bill would greatly enhance our commitment and duty to never forget our veterans by allowing communities along with the state to be able to shine a spotlight on the sacrifices, challenges, and contributions of our veterans. It would create a greater window to showcase our veterans. Currently there are almost 30 National Monthly awareness programs, Black History Month, Women’s Month the list goes on. The NDVLC supports this bill and asks for a yes vote.

Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee
69th Legislative Session
Senator Luick-Chair

Chairman Luick and Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

Please accept this testimony in support of HB 1148.

Intent of this bill:

Establish the Month of May as “Military Appreciation Month”.

Need for bill:

- As per congressional action in 1999: Each year, the president makes a proclamation reminding Americans of the important role the U.S. Armed Forces have played in the history and development of our country. May was chosen because it has many individual days marked to note our military's achievements, including
 - Loyalty Day May 1 (since 1955 Dwight D. Eisenhower) A day for declaring loyalty to the USA and acknowledge American history.
 - Victory in Europe (VE) Day commemorating the end of WWII in Europe: May 8, 1945
 - Children of Fallen Patriots Day (May 13)
 - The anniversary of the death of Osama bin Laden (May 2, 2011)
 - Arlington National Cemetery was founded May 13, 1864.
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 - Military Spouse Appreciation Day: The Friday in May before Mother's Day, this special day was first recognized by President Ronald Reagan in 1984.
 - Armed Forces Day: On Aug. 31, 1949, Defense Secretary Louis Johnson announced the creation of an Armed Forces Day to replace separate Army, Navy and Air Force Days. The single-day celebration stemmed from the unification of the armed forces under one agency -- the Department of Defense.

Outcome of bill:

North Dakota would be in line with federal “Armed Forces month”. ND Governor proclamation would be issued annually.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lonnie Wangen Commissioner-NDDVA