

**2025 HOUSE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**HB 1180**

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

Pioneer Room, State Capitol

HB 1180

1/16/2025

Relating to eligibility for certain veteran earned benefits; and to provide an effective date.

2:49 p.m. Chairman Schauer called the meeting to order.

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

Members absent: Vice Chairman Satrom

### Discussion Topics:

- Alignment with Federal terminology

2:50 p.m. Representative Pyle, testified in favor and submitted testimony, #29371.

2:56 p.m. Lonnie Wangen, Commissioner of Veteran's Affairs North Dakota, testified in favor and submitted testimony, #29383, #29384.

3:06 p.m. Keith Pic, Director of Claims from NDIRF, testified in favor.

3:08 p.m. Chairman Schauer closed the hearing.

3:08 p.m. Representative Bahl moved Do Pass.

3:08 p.m. Representative Schneider 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	Y
Representative Lori VanWinkle	Y

Representative Steve Vetter	Y
Representative Christina Wolff	Y

3:10 p.m. Motion passed 13-0-1.

Representative Bahl will carry the bill.

3:11 p.m. Chairman Schauer closed the meeting

*Jackson Toman, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**HB 1180 ([25.0447.01000](#))**

**Government and Veterans Affairs Committee (Rep. Schauer, Chairman)** recommends **DO PASS** (13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1180 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.



# North Dakota House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL  
600 EAST BOULEVARD  
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



## Representative Brandy Pyle

District 22  
P.O. Box 337  
Casselton, ND 58012-0337  
[bpyle@ndlegis.gov](mailto:bpyle@ndlegis.gov)

## COMMITTEES:

Appropriations

HB 1180  
1.16.2025  
House GVA

Good afternoon Chair Schauer and GVA Committee:

Today, I stand before you to introduce House Bill 1180, a piece of legislation rooted in housekeeping but with significant implications for our dedicated veterans. Our intent on this bill is simple yet crucial: to clear up language in the North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) to reflect the verbiage used in VA letters on combined service-connected evaluations and Individual Unemployability (IU).

### Intent of the Bill

We aim to align our state laws with the federal terminology used by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This bill seeks to eliminate the ambiguities and misinterpretations that arise due to differences in language.

### Need for the Bill

While the main offices of the North Dakota Department of Transportation (DOT), the Tax Commissioner's office, and several others currently understand and differentiate between these laws, local staff and new employees may not be as familiar. This discrepancy occasionally results in veterans spending hours on phone calls and discussions to clarify their eligibility, delaying or even denying them their earned benefits.

### Current Challenge

The verbiage used by our government employees sometimes conflicts with the VA's language, particularly regarding disability letters. For instance, the term "...a resident disabled veteran who has a one hundred percent service-connected disability as determined by the department of veterans' affairs, or a resident disabled veteran who has an extra-schedular rating to include individual unemployability that brings the veteran's total disability rating to one hundred percent as determined by the department of veterans' affairs..." needs to be better understood at all levels.

### Clarifications on VA Disability Ratings

- **Service-Connected Disability:** A condition incurred or aggravated during military service for which the veteran receives VA benefits.
- **Combined Service-Connected Evaluation:** The aggregate rating for all service-connected disabilities.

- **Individual Unemployability (IU):** This allows veterans to be compensated at the 100% rate even if their combined service-connected evaluation is not 100%, as their conditions prevent them from maintaining gainful employment.

For clarity, VA ratings add each disability individually, combining them for an overall rating, which is then rounded to the nearest 10%. Using VA math, it would require five disabling issues rated at 50% to equal a total 100% disability.

### **Outcome of the Bill**

The outcome we seek is to align the NDCC language with that of the federal VA, reducing confusion and ensuring our veterans receive the benefits they have earned without undue hassle. Importantly, this bill does not introduce new benefits but ensures the fair and accurate delivery of existing ones.

In conclusion, House Bill 1180 represents a step forward in streamlining our processes, honoring our commitment to veterans, and ensuring they receive the respect and clarity they deserve. I urge you all to support this bill and help us make this necessary adjustment to better serve our veterans.

Behind me, are the experts, who can explain this math, and show the examples of how this bill will help our veterans.

I stand for questions.

Thank you.

Brandy L. Pyle

HB 1180

North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs  
Lonnie Wangen-Commissioner

1/16/2025

**House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee**  
**69<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session**  
**Representative Schauer-Chair**

Chairman Schauer and House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee,

Please accept this testimony in support of HB 1180.

**Intent of bill:**

Housekeeping. Clear up NDCC language to reflect verbiage on VA letters on combined service-connected evaluation and **Individual Unemployability (IU)**.

**Need for bill:**

While the ND DOT main office, the ND Tax Commissioners office, and many others currently understand and agree with the differentiation of the laws, many times the local staff or new employees are unaware of how the VA letters are written. This occasionally causes hours of phone calls and discussion to clarify and delays or denies veterans their earned benefits.

The verbiage "...a resident disabled veteran who has a one hundred percent service-connected disability as determined by the department of veterans' affairs, **or a resident disabled veteran who has an extra-schedular rating to include individual unemployability that brings the veteran's total disability rating to one hundred percent as determined by the department of veterans' affairs...**"

(VA IU does **not** bring a combined service-connected disability to 100%. IU leaves the combined service-connected % rating but increases the benefit to 100% rate through the "extra schedular rating").

VA disability rating explanation.

VA rates each disability individually. Adds (combines) the disabilities for a combined service-connected disability rating. This number is rounded up and ratings are at 10% increments.

With VA math it would take five (5) 50% disabling issues to equal a 100% disability.

VA definitions (found on back of VA benefits letter):

- **SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY:** A condition incurred during or aggravated by military service, for which the Veteran is receiving VA benefits.
- **COMBINED SERVICE-CONNECTED EVALUTION:** The Veteran's disability rating for all conditions determined to be service-connected.
- **INDIVIDUAL UNEMPLOYABILITY (IU):** The Veteran is receiving payment at the 100 percent rate, **even though the combined service-connected evaluation is not 100 percent.**

The Veteran's service-connected conditions cause him/her to be unable to obtain or maintain substantially gainful employment because of the Veteran's service-connected conditions. The Veteran must periodically certify continued unemployability, but if there is no scheduled future reduction or medical examination required, he/she may be considered by some states to be permanently and totally disabled.

**Outcome of bill:**

Align verbiage of NDCC with federal VA. Reduce confusion in future.

No additional benefit to veteran.

**Fiscal note:**

None expected.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Lonnie Wangen Commissioner-NDDVA



**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**2101 ELM ST  
FARGO ND 58102

December 26, 2013

Veteran's Name:  
Joe B. VeteranJoe B. Veteran  
124 America Way  
WEST FARGO ND 58078

This letter is a summary of benefits you currently receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We are providing this letter to disabled Veterans to use in applying for benefits such as housing entitlements, free or reduced state park annual memberships, state or local property or vehicle tax relief, civil service preference, or any other program or entitlement in which verification of VA benefits is required. Please safeguard this important document. This letter replaces VA Form 20-5455, and is considered an official record of your VA entitlement.

**--America is Grateful to You for Your Service--**

Our records contain the following information:

**Personal Claim Information:**

Your VA claim number is: xxx-xx-xxxx  
You are the Veteran

**Military Information:**

Your character(s) of discharge and service date(s) include:

Army, Honorable, 12-Jan-2005 - 29-Apr-2005

Army, Honorable, 01-Dec-2005 - 29-Apr-2007

Army, Honorable, 18-Jan-2008 - 08-Mar-2009

(You may have additional periods of service not listed above)

**VA Benefits Information:**

Service-connected disability: Yes

Your combined service-connected evaluation is: 90 PERCENT

The effective date of the last change to your current award was: 01-DEC-2013

Your current monthly award amount is: \$0,000.00

Are you being paid at the 100 percent rate because you are unemployable due to your service-connected disabilities: Yes

You should contact your state or local office of Veterans' affairs for information on any tax, license, or fee-related benefits for which you may be eligible. State offices of Veterans' affairs are available at <http://www.va.gov/statedva.htm>.

**Need Additional Information or Verification?**

If you have any questions about this letter or need additional verification of VA benefits, please call us at 1-800-827-1000. If you use a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), the number is 1-800-829-4833. Send electronic inquiries through the Internet at <https://iris.va.gov>.

Sincerely yours,

John Smith  
VETERANS SERVICE CENTER MANAGER

## **VA Benefit Details**

**SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY:** A condition incurred during or aggravated by military service, for which the Veteran is receiving VA benefits.

**COMBINED SERVICE-CONNECTED EVALUATION:** The Veteran's disability rating for all conditions determined to be service-connected.

**CURRENT MONTHLY AWARD AMOUNT:** The monthly monetary benefit paid to the Veteran or survivor receiving benefits under a VA program.

**NON-SERVICE-CONNECTED PENSION:** Benefit for a non-service connected Veteran who meets specific criteria, which include disability or age, wartime service, minimum length of service, and income restrictions. If a Veteran is eligible for service-connected benefits and pension benefits, VA will pay the higher benefit.

**INDIVIDUAL UNEMPLOYABILITY (IU):** The Veteran is receiving payment at the 100 percent rate, even though the combined service-connected evaluation is not 100 percent. The Veteran's service-connected conditions cause him/her to be unable to obtain or maintain substantially gainful employment because of the Veteran's service-connected conditions. The Veteran must periodically certify continued unemployability, but if there is no scheduled future reduction or medical examination required, he/she may be considered by some states to be permanently and totally disabled.

**PERMANENT AND TOTAL (P&T) DISABILITY:** The Veteran is considered by VA to be permanently and totally disabled because of his/her service-connected conditions.

**SPECIAL MONTHLY COMPENSATION:** The Veteran is receiving additional compensation for one or more of the following: a service-connected loss of or loss of use of one or more specific organs or extremities; a combination of severe disabilities; is 100 percent disabled and housebound, bedridden, or in the need of the aid and attendance of another person.

**SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING and/or SPECIAL HOME ADAPTATION GRANT:** Grants provided by VA to service-connected veterans and service members to help build a new specially adapted house, to adapt a home they already own, or buy a house and modify it to meet their disability-related requirements.

## **Wartime Service Periods**

**Mexican Border Period:** May 9, 1916, through April 5, 1917, for veterans who served in Mexico, on its borders or in adjacent waters.

**World War I:** April 6, 1917, through Nov. 11, 1918; for veterans who served in Russia, April 6, 1917, through April 1, 1920; extended through July 1, 1921, for veterans who had at least one day of service between April 6, 1917, and Nov. 11, 1918.

**World War II:** Dec. 7, 1941, through Dec. 31, 1946.

**Korean War:** June 27, 1950, through Jan. 31, 1955.

**Vietnam War:** Aug. 5, 1964 (Feb. 28, 1961, for veterans who served "in country" before Aug. 5, 1964), through May 7, 1975.

**Gulf War:** Aug. 2, 1990, through a date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation.

**2025 SENATE AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**HB 1180**

# 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee

Fort Union Room, State Capitol

HB 1180

2/21/2025

A bill relating to eligibility for certain veteran earned benefits and to provide an effective date.

10:30 a.m. Chairman Luick opened the hearing.

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

### Discussion Topics:

- Century code language clarification
- Department of Veterans Affairs and VA disability letters
- Disability ratings
- Fair and accurate delivery of current benefits
- Determined unemployable
- Service connected disabilities
- Combined service-connected evaluation
- Local level interpretation
- Education tuition and vehicle excise tax
- Federal statute alignment

10:30 a.m. Representative Brandy Pyle, District 22, testified in favor and submitted testimony #37846.

10:34 a.m. Lonnie Wangen, Commissioner for the ND Department of Veterans Affairs, testified in favor and submitted testimony #38322.

10:45 a.m. Chairman Luick closed the hearing.

10:45 a.m. Senator Myrdal moved a Do Pass.

10:45 a.m. Senator Marcellais 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

Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee  
HB 1180  
2/21/25  
Page 2

Motion passed 6-0-0.

Senator Lemm will carry the bill.

10:46 a.m. Chairman Luick adjourned the meeting.

*Audrey Oswald, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**HB 1180 ([25.0447.01000](#))**

**Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee (Sen. Luick, Chairman)** recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1180 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.





# North Dakota House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL  
600 EAST BOULEVARD  
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



## Representative Brandy Pyle

District 22  
P.O. Box 337  
Casselton, ND 58012-0337  
[bpyle@ndlegis.gov](mailto:bpyle@ndlegis.gov)

## COMMITTEES:

Appropriations

HB 1180

2.21.25

Senate Ag and Veteran Affairs

Good afternoon Chair Luick and members of the of the Ag and Veteran Affairs Committee:

Today, I stand before you to introduce House Bill 1180, a piece of legislation rooted in housekeeping but with significant implications for our dedicated veterans. Our intent on this bill is simple yet crucial: to clear up language in the North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) to reflect the verbiage used in VA letters on combined service-connected evaluations and Individual Unemployability (IU).

### Intent of the Bill

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I stand for questions.

Thank you.

Brandy L. Pyle



HB 1148

North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs  
Lonnie Wangen-Commissioner

2/21/2025

**Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee**  
**69<sup>th</sup> 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.
  - 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 be in line with federal "Armed Forces month". ND Governor proclamation would be issued annually.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lonnie Wangen Commissioner-NDDVA