

Good afternoon,

My name is Wallace Keller, and I am resident of Burleigh County.

I am here today to testify in support of HB 1134.

I will be up front with you; I do have some selfish reasons for supporting HB 1134. Two of my children are currently serving in the National Guard (NG). My son lives in Pennsylvania and is currently a member of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. Prior moving to Pennsylvania, my son served with the NDNG for approximately 9 years. He did two deployments to Afghanistan with the North Dakota National Guard. My daughter a member of the North Dakota National Guard and works full time for the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, VA. She keeps her residency in North Dakota, so this bill would not affect her at this time. She has 22 years of service and a deployment to Afghanistan with the North Dakota National Guard.

According to the number provided by the NDNG there are 1454 current members of the NDNG that have out of state home of records. These members respond with the North Dakota National Guard to floods, fires, domestic issues and, if called, to overseas deployments – many of which are in unstable areas or outright wars. Yet, they cannot come to ND and purchase a resident hunting or fishing licensed. I do not know how many of those personnel hunt or fish so I cannot give you an accurate number on how many would come take advantage of the fee change. They are serving our state and should have the opportunity to be able to purchase hunting and fishing licenses at the resident rate if they are a current member of the North Dakota National Guard.

There are no numbers on how many former North Dakota National Guard members live out of state. The lower license fees may bring back some of our past North Dakota National Guard residents. If drawn, they would come home and possibly bring their family with. They will eat here, purchase gas and sporting good items here and maybe realize they should have never left and decide to move back home.

It is my opinion that if an individual has served honorably with the North Dakota National Guard and is a past resident of North Dakota or, is currently serving with the North Dakota National Guard and has an out of state home of record, they have earned the privilege of purchasing a hunting and fishing license at the resident rate.

The members – past and present- of the North Dakota National Guard have served with distinction and honor time after time. Some have made the ultimate sacrifice. I am asking you to make the opportunity to enjoy the natural resources of our state a little more affordable for those who have given so much. Sometimes it's not all about the money and it's just the right thing to do!

In closing I would recommend a change to, "a member would have had to have served "honorably".

Pending any questions, I thank you for your time and urge a "do pass" on this bill.

Wallace Keller