

**Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee  
 68<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 1326.

Intent of this bill...

Suicide Prevention among Veterans

- Allow ND Department of Veterans Affairs access to the death records of ND Resident Veterans and Military members.
  - Records can be reviewed for patterns or opportunities to target prevention measures.

Need for bill...

- The national average for veteran & military suicides have been at 22 per day. Current research shows that that number has dropped to 20. Many states are taking targeted action.
- ND Veteran Suicides. Source: ND Vital Records

| Death Year | Under 35 | AGE 35 TO 54 | AGE 55+ | Total |
|------------|----------|--------------|---------|-------|
| 2017       | 11       | 10           | 10      | 31    |
| 2018       | 6        | 5            | 9       | 20    |
| 2019       | 5        | 6            | 11      | 22    |
| 2020       | 8        | 9            | 12      | 29    |
| 2021       | 5        | 3            | 12      | 20    |
| 2022       | 5        | 8            | 6       | 19    |
| Total      | 40       | 41           | 60      | 141   |

Some organizations working to prevent ND Veteran Suicides:

- Governor’s Challenge
- ND HOPES (Healthcare, Oppportunity, Prevention, and Education in Suicide prevention)
- ND CARES
- Cass Clay Suicide Review Commission
- VA Suicide Prevention Program

Outcome of Bill...

- Reduce suicide among ND Veterans with “Targeted” suicide prevention.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lonnie Wangen Commissioner-NDDVA