



NORTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD ENLISTED ASSOCIATION
3298 SHEENA COURT
GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA 58201

February 27, 2023

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Chuck Votava and I represent the members of the North Dakota National Guard Enlisted Association (NDNGEA). Our organization consists of members of the Army, Air Force, Retirees, and civilian employees of the North Dakota National Guard who promote the interest and maintain the professionalism of the National Guard.

The NDNGEA would like to express support of HB 1134 Relating to hunting and fishing license, permit and application fees for out of state national guard members and submit the following justification:

1. **Parity with Active-Duty counterparts and order status.** Current state law allows military service members from any branch who are on active-duty orders within the state of North Dakota to apply for and purchase hunting and fishing licenses at the resident rate. Airmen who are residents of other states but stationed at Grand Forks or Minot can purchase North Dakota resident hunting and fishing licenses. Another example would be, Regular Army, Army Reserve, or National Guardsmen from any state who come to the Regional Training Institute in Devils Lake, ND for 2 or 4 weeks on active-duty orders for training can purchase a fishing license, at the resident rate, to enjoy the wonderful fishing that Devils Lake provides. When our own North Dakota National Guardsmen come to North Dakota for Inactive Duty Training periods each month of the year, they are not on an active-duty order and do not qualify for these benefits. When The Governor of North Dakota orders the National Guard on State Active Duty for reasons of floods, blizzards, protests, and other emergencies, they do not qualify for these benefits because "State Active-Duty" does not qualify as an "Active-Duty order". It is odd that we offer this benefit to servicemembers who are passing through our state and will likely never return, but do not offer it to servicemembers of the National Guard who are likely to return monthly for the majority of their career.

Although it is not possible to say exactly how many people would use this benefit if they were allowed to, there are currently 727 Soldiers and Airmen in the North Dakota National Guard who live outside of North Dakota.

2. **Retention of Airmen and Soldiers within the North Dakota National Guard.** 2022 marked a historically low year for recruiting across all branches of the Armed Services. Our own state's National Guard only recruited to 59% of it's

goal. Sadly, this number was significantly better than most of the other states National Guards. Attrition, or the loss of Guardsmen is a natural process and things like retirement, Ending Time in Service (ETS), Inter-State Transfers (IST) impact the end strength of our National Guard as well. Last year, amidst all of the struggles with recruiting and retention nationally, North Dakota was rated #1 out the 54 National Guard organizations in the United States in retention. This speaks to the quality of our organization and the people in it. While it is commonplace for National Guardsmen to complete an Inter-State Transfer when they move out of state, members of the North Dakota National Guard tend to travel back, at their own expense, for required training rather than serve in another state's organization. Allowing these members to retain the ability to hunt and fish at the resident cost is a small token of appreciation for their enduring service to our state and retention tool that comes at very little cost.

3. Specific Examples.

- a. Daniel Strehlow joined the Minnesota National Guard in 1999 after serving in the Marine Corps. As he moved throughout the course of his civilian career, he Inter-State Transferred from state to state 6 times before ending up in the North Dakota National Guard in 2010. Despite moving to California, he chose to remain in the North Dakota National Guard. He travels back to North Dakota for Inactive Duty Training each month (at his own cost) and is currently representing the North Dakota National Guard in Washington D.C. on his 6th deployment total and 4th deployment with the North Dakota National Guard. California resident, North Dakota Guardsmen.
- b. Jacob Kipp was born in Michigan and joined the North Dakota National Guard in 2014 when he moved to Grand Forks to attend the University of North Dakota. While there, he enrolled in ROTC and accepted his commission as a Second Lieutenant in 2019 when he graduated from UND. He deployed with the 1-188th ADA from June of 2021 through September of 2022. Upon return home, he moved to Colorado with his wife (also a North Dakota Guardsmen) for employment. He and his wife continue to serve in the North Dakota National Guard while living in Colorado. Colorado resident, North Dakota Guardsmen.
- c. Hector Pastor transferred to the North Dakota National Guard in 1996 after leaving the active-duty Air Force and being stationed at Grand Forks Air Force Base. He was assigned to Detachment 2 of the 142nd Engineer Combat Battalion in Mayville, ND. He moved to Saint Cloud, MN for work, but remained in the North Dakota National Guard. On Martin Luther King Day in 2003, he was called and given 10 days' notice that his Battalion would be deploying to Iraq, and he was to report to Mayville, ND. He deployed three times in total and ended his career by sharing his experiences as an instructor at the Regional Training Institute before retiring from the North Dakota National Guard in 2018. Minnesota resident, North Dakota Guardsmen.

I could fill pages of testimony with examples of Soldiers and Airmen who have served the North Dakota National Guard from other states. From the floods of 1997 and 2011, to Dakota Access Pipeline protests, to the COVID pandemic, North Dakota Guardsmen have been called upon by our state to be there when needed. From Federal deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Kosovo, the National Capital Region, and the Southwest Border, “non-resident” Guardsmen have answered the call when North Dakota was asked to defend our nation. For the reasons listed above and because they’ve earned it, I ask the committee to support the recommendation of HB 1134.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES A. VOTAVA
Executive Director, NDNGEA