

2015 HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS

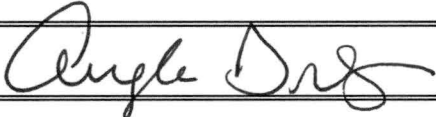
HB 1025

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee - Human Resources Division
Sakakawea Room, State Capitol

HB1025
1/15/2015
Job 22023

- Subcommittee
 Conference Committee



Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the department of veterans' affairs.

Minutes:

Attachments 1-4

Chairman Pollert called the committee to order.

Lonnie Wangen, Commissioner, ND Department of Veterans Affairs: Read written testimony (attachment 1).

Chairman Pollert: (0:23:53) On page 2 of your testimony, I want to go through the items listed under the section to restore the base budget funding to operating levels. You're saying that you're short on your base budget funding. Did you ask when you needed to submit your budget to the executive branch? Did you have these in there and they weren't included?

Lonnie Wangen: Normally they ask you to cut back by 3% and then they will give it back. The last few bienniums they did just in case they had to cut back. It was not fully put back.

Chairman Pollert: Is this one of the agencies that didn't get the 3% back? Did any others?

Nick Kramer, OMB: I see that the Governor recommended the \$47,000. I'll check with Lori to see if that does not include that 3% and get back to you.

Chairman Pollert: On the third page (subheading 1). You must have had a meeting with OMB. You asked for the \$2 million and it wasn't put in the budget, correct?

Lonnie Wangen: That's correct.

Chairman Pollert: (Subheading 2, Veterans Organizations NSO Office) As far as the \$150,000. Is that the same thing? You brought that forward but it wasn't put into the budget?

Lonnie Wangen: That's correct.

Chairman Pollert: (Subheading 3, State Approving Agency) I know when I see the green sheet because we had this discussion last session. That transfer is on the way already.

Lonnie Wangen: Yes, I believe that was included in the budget.

Chairman Pollert: (Subheading 4, Salary Equity Funding) Half of it is in there.

Lonnie Wangen: That's correct.

Chairman Pollert: (Subheading 5, Training Position) Did you request that position and it wasn't funded in the Executive Budget?

Lonnie Wangen: That's correct.

Chairman Pollert: (Subheading 6, Website Upgrade) Was that put in?

Lonnie Wangen: That was not put in.

Chairman Pollert: Do you have a project that is not completed at an estimated \$60,000?

Lonnie Wangen: That is our website project. I would defer that to ITD to explain that. I don't understand how the costs go up as high as they do.

Chairman Pollert: (Subheading 7, Temp Employees) Did you ask for those and they weren't funded?

Lonnie Wangen: That's correct.

Chairman Pollert: (Subheading 8, Service Dogs and Subheading 9, Agent Orange Outreach) I see those were one-time funding. Did you ask for those to be put in your base budget?

Lonnie Wangen: Yes and they were not included in the Governor's base budget.

Chairman Pollert: (Subheading 10, Stand Downs) The Stand Downs are increased \$10,000.

Lonnie Wangen: The Governor did increase that \$10,000 in the budget.

Chairman Pollert: (Subheading 11, Transportation Vans) You need 1.

Lonnie Wangen: That's correct.

Rep. Nelson: During the last session, didn't we get on a staggered replacement?

Chairman Pollert: I think they got one donated and this one would be two.

Lonnie Wangen: Yes. We look at the mileage and estimate how long the vans we have will last. Looking into the next biennium, we will need to replace only one van and not two.

Rep. Nelson: Some of the programs that you have in your budget, like the PTSD and the TBI services. There are a number of bills being introduced in that area. Are we duplicating? Are you hiring staff for outreach, for services, or how is this funding being utilized in your budget?

Lonnie Wangen: Are you referring to the service dogs or Agent Orange?

Rep. Nelson: In the temp employees. How would they be utilized for those services?

Lonnie Wangen: Those temp employees would help us gather information to put on these programs and to assist us with everything listed here and different federal programs.

Rep. Nelson: Were any of the temps funded in the Governor's budget?

Lonnie Wangen: No, they were not funded.

Rep. Kreidt: Back to the vans. From the last session, the policy was that once a van reaches 150,000 miles, that's when you look at replacing them. Were they replaced?

Lonnie Wangen: Yes, those vans have been replaced.

Rep. Kreidt: Are you going to get a free one?

Lonnie Wangen: We've received a free one and that one has already been placed. We have one coming now. In the next biennium we see the need for one. The biennium after that, at our current rates, we might not need a van at all. We are working with the VA to get a good forecast of what we'll need in the future.

Rep. Kreidt: Is the one coming going to Bismarck?

Lonnie Wangen: We do move the vans around so that the mileage stays down.

Chairman Pollert: When you were looking at the CVSOs for the training for those temps, where were you looking for those 3 to be put? Was that out of your office in Fargo?

Lonnie Wangen: That would either be out of our office or the office in Bismarck. I don't see where you're talking about 3 temps.

Chairman Pollert: I thought you said you were looking for \$50,000 in 3 organizations.

Lonnie Wangen: NSO

Chairman Pollert: Sorry. That's different.

Lonnie Wangen: Those are all located at the regional offices.

Chairman Pollert: Tell me the difference between the bus and the van.

Lonnie Wangen: The vans we purchase here, we donate to the VA and they are sent around the state. Those vans are there to take veterans to the VA medical facility for services. Those are located in our larger counties. We've applied for a grant for transportation in highly rural areas. In ND, we have 36 highly rural areas. We were awarded this grant. There are two different parts to it. One is where we can pay for the state vans that are out there now; you probably know them as the senior vans. The DOT has ownership or has a lot of control over those. But they are independently contracted out. We have agreements with them that through the Grand Forks route match system, they can call there and use the service to get to any medical appointment. We will pay for that. The other portion is to provide vans that we will get from the federal VA. Those will go to that same program. With those vans, there will be no charge for the veterans. They will do routes in those highly rural counties where they are assigned.

Rep. Silbernagel: How many CVSOs are in ND?

Lonnie Wangen: There are 53 counties. Each county is required to have a county veterans' service officer. I believe there are about 49 service officers because some share counties.

Chairman Pollert: When you're talking about the \$2 million. Tell us about the Post War Trust Fund, the interest, and what you do with that program.

Lonnie Wangen: The Post War Trust Fund is a fund that was set aside many years back. The principle of the fund cannot be spent. It's invested by the state's treasurer's office. Some of the interest earnings will go to the Administrative Committee on Veterans' Affairs. They're a Governor-appointed committee. They determine how the funds will be spent for the benefit of the veterans. This is part of the ND Constitution. It's been at about \$4.1 million for 30 years. About a biennium and a half ago, the fund did start to grow. The buying power after 2008, the cost of living and inflation from 20-30 years ago, that \$4 million in there now does not buy as much as we need to take care of our veterans. The idea behind the \$2 million is that will help us to ensure for the future, that interest earnings can grow the fund and provide for our veterans today.

Chairman Pollert: How much is in the Post War Trust Fund now?

Lonnie Wangen: I believe it's just over \$5 million. Last biennium, \$250,000 was added to the principle. It has been growing also.

Vice Chairman Bellew: I'd like to know where it's at in the budget. I don't see any income from the Post War Trust Fund in your budget.

Lonnie Wangen: That's not part of our budget. The money from the interest from the Post War Trust Fund doesn't cover any of our expenses. It goes directly to veterans' programs.

Chairman Pollert: With the interest that comes in from that, is it run through your office? Is your office where the loans and grants get applied to? Do you have to dispense those?

Lonnie Wangen: Partially correct. The ACOVA determines where the money is spent. They give us so much for the grant program and they set the details and policies for the grant program. The grant program is one of the many things they can do with it. The grant program is run by us. When we make payments for those grant programs, it comes directly out of that 410 clearing account where the interest earnings are at.

Chairman Pollert: You don't charge any administrative costs for that?

Lonnie Wangen: That is correct.

Chairman Pollert: Did you lose the individual that was doing that and hire someone else?

Lonnie Wangen: That is correct.

Rep. Kreidt: Is there an individual that specifically deals with the Post War Trust Fund as far as accounting?

Lonnie Wangen: There is accounting on the State Treasurer's side that takes care of everything. They give us a monthly report of how much money is in that clearing account. On our side, we track how much we've spent out of it.

Chairman Pollert: ACOVA sets the agenda and the rules on those grants. There is a difference between a grant and a loan. Are you doing 2 different types with that money?

Lonnie Wangen: No. The loan program is a set of dollars that were set aside many years back. That is on its own. Those dollars are loaned out at 8% interest. When they pay it off, the veterans get half their interest back. We gain about 4% on them. We would write it off if they die or are uncollectable. It has stayed about the same. It runs around \$500,000 that we have that we're loaning out at all times. It is totally separate from the Post War Trust Fund.

Chairman Pollert: So it is not the interest off the Post War Trust Fund for that particular one. You make it sound like that's self-earning.

Lonnie Wangen: In a way it is. It earns its own interest. It's been a perpetual fund.

Chairman Pollert: You have this one for about \$500,000 which is a loan program.

Lonnie Wangen: That is correct.

Chairman Pollert: Then we have the other program of grants.

Lonnie Wangen: That is correct.

Chairman Pollert: That comes off the Post War Trust Fund?

Lonnie Wangen: That is correct.

Chairman Pollert: Is that grants or loans?

Lonnie Wangen: That is just grants.

Chairman Pollert: Do you have a reconciliation of those?

Lonnie Wangen: Yes, we have reconciliation of those and the auditors come in and audit those also. That's part of our agency audit.

Chairman Pollert: Is that the state auditor's office?

Lonnie Wangen: Yes.

Chairman Pollert: Lori, is there another fund besides the Post War Trust Fund?

Lori Laschkewitsch, OMB: The loan fund is a separate piece. It is a revolving loan fund. It's not like the Post War Trust Fund, where there is a big chunk of money and they are just using the interest off of it. The amount in there is a revolving amount.

Chairman Pollert: During the last session, there were a number of legislators that got letters and e-mails that stated the program had run out of money. Was that the loan program or the revolving perpetual program? Or was it both? Also, involved in that because I think ACOVA had made the decision to appropriate \$50,000 to the nursing home out of one of those funds.

Lonnie Wangen: The loan program had no concern. The issue with giving money to the home and saying that there was no funds in the grant program, that's where the e-mails came from. It never did run out of money. But there was concern that they thought it was out of money.

Rep. Nelson: There was some support given during the last session for Vietnam veterans to get them more involved with the services that are provided. Do you have any numbers with that additional support? Were you able to identify and provide support for more post-Vietnam veterans? When the website issue came up, this should have been done a long time ago. Are the services available given that the website isn't at its completed stage?

Lonnie Wangen: Are you asking if the website is functional?

Rep. Nelson: I know it's functional but there is another request for funding. What will be completed in the new funding to make it more accessible for veterans to use? What is added to that?

Lonnie Wangen: Basically it is the map feature. The idea is that a veteran can go on and look for mental health and sees what's close to them. The other part is just finishing up some other areas of our website so they are complete. There has been a lot of changeover with the people that worked with us on this. I'm working with the fifth person now. They have to relearn it and then go off to someone else. The main thing we wanted was the map feature. The rest is little things like where the banners go and how things archive.

Rep. Nelson: As far as the Vietnam piece, are we providing more services because of that support?

Lonnie Wangen: Yes. It's on the second page of the handout; the grants to Agent Orange. We've had the 15 events with about 400 veterans attending. Of those, they identified for sure 89 veterans that were not receiving the care or benefits that they needed. Of those, we confirmed that 86 of them did do a follow-up for a claim to the VA.

Rhonda Schauer, Director for the ND State Approving Agency: Read testimony in favor of the bill (attachment 2) (0:56:14).

Lyle Schuchard, member of the Legislative Committee of the ND Veterans Coordinating Council: Read testimony in favor of the bill (attachment 3).

Kelly Schmidt, State Treasurer: Provided testimony regarding the Veterans Post War Trust Fund, distributed income, and Melvin Norgard Fund (attachment 4) (1:00:54).

Rep. Kreidt: We talked about a loan fund and \$5 million in the Post War Trust Fund. Is that \$500,000 that we were talking about considered part of that \$5 million?

Kelly Schmidt: I'm not familiar with that \$500,000 so I believe it's in a separate entity under the prevue of a separate group.

Rep. Kreidt: So you're handling the Post War Trust Fund.

Kelly Schmidt: That and the Melvin Norgard fund.

Rep. Silbernagel: As trustee, do you make the investment decisions on this trust fund?

Kelly Schmidt: The constitution provides that I am the sole fiduciary trustee of this fund. However, I have always used the advice and wisdom of many people in the industry as we move to make very good decisions for this very important fund. We've worked very hard to have a steady stream of income in working with the Uniform Principle and Income Act; you can see how we've managed this fund. How we invest this fund can very much affect the dollar amount and the revenue source to ACOVA. We take that into consideration as well as making sure that things are handled safely at as much of a reduced cost as we possibly can. The fees to this fund are less than 1%, which is lower than your average mutual fund account. I work with very experienced professionals as we make the decisions on this fund.

Chairman Pollert recessed the committee.

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee - Human Resources Division Sakakawea Room, State Capitol

HB1025
2/4/2015
23251

- Subcommittee
 Conference Committee

Donna Whetnam

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the department of veterans' affairs.

Minutes:

Attachment # 1, 2, 2a-6.

Chairman Pollert called the committee to order on HB 1025.

Cathy Halgunseth: North Dakota Veterans Affairs. (1:05- 2:50) Read written testimony on Veterans Affairs budget. (See attachment #1).

Vice Chairman Bellew: Will \$15,000 buy only one van? Do you have a matching grant from somewhere?

Cathy Halgunseth: Yes, only one van and no we do not have a matching grant.

Chairman Pollert: In the overview, I thought that you been in a drawing for a van and you were lucky and received that and now needed one more van.

Cathy Halgunseth: Yes, one more van. Continued explaining the budget about Agent Orange and money given to the VA to assist them disabilities from their Service in Vietnam.

Vice Chairman Bellew: Has that worked and do we have a report on that?

Cathy Halgunseth: The commissioner gave a report on that previously.

Lonnie Wangen: Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, that was in our overview.

Chairman Pollert: But in this biennium it wasn't included in the executive budget?

Cathy Holgunseth: That is correct it was not included within the Governor's recommendation.

Chairman Pollert: Is there a separate bill for Agent Orange by Representative Trottier for \$100,000 dollars?

Lonnie Wangen: Yes.

Chairman Pollert: Is there a separate bill for PTSD dogs?

Lonnie Wangen: No, there is not.

Cathy Halgunseth: (5:04-623) Continued to read written testimony. (See Attachment #1).

Chairman Pollert: Just to let people know anything dealing with equity will be pulled. Every agency and section is doing it and I don't know if the Senate side is pulling it, but we are in the House. We told every agency so far that that would be pulled. Just so you are not surprised when you see that amendment because it will happen. Anything dealing with buildings or market equity will be pulled.

Cathy Halgunseth: Do you want me to go through each area? Our budget is fairly straight forward.

Chairman Pollert: We'll look at the spend down report and then if we have questions I hope they will be asked.

Cathy Halgunseth: Continued going over budget. (8:08-8:36) (See Attachment #1)

Rep. Kreidt: On the \$27,000 increase for rentals, are you adding space?

Cathy Halgunseth: Our Fargo office is on a five year lease and so it does not go up. Bismarck has gone up immensely. When we put the budget together, they couldn't give us any solid numbers. It was a 5-8% increase.

Chairman Pollert: Did you have to rent another office for the State Approving Agency.

Cathy Halgunseth: There was an open office for her to move into, but if we are to expand or get her any additional help we will have to move that office.

Vice Chairman Bellew: You said Bismarck is going to raise your rent 5-8%, but your requested increase is over 30%.

Cathy Halgunseth: Part of that is with the State Approving Agency(SAA) funding coming in, she is funding part of that office. So they took out general fund dollars and put in federal fund dollars.

Vice Chairman Bellew: Is the SAA the new position in the budget?

Cathy Halgunseth: Yes.

Chairman Pollert: The State Approving Agency was talked about last session but didn't get done. It was from Higher Education from the University System? So it should be a transfer right out of the University System directly over to here, it should be a money to money switch.

Cathy Halgunseth: That is correct. The federal funding coming into our office offsets some of the general fund dollars that we had been using for grants.

Chairman Pollert: Could I get you to verify that to make sure that came out of the University System as well?

Alex Cronquist, Legislative Council, Fiscal Analyst : The FDE has been removed from the University System.

Vice Chairman Bellew: The amounts they have in the budget for it is that the amount that was taken out of Higher Education?

Cathy Halgunseth: That is our understanding we got the funds and it was a dollar for dollar from Higher Ed into us. Continued to read written testimony on the budget. Mentioned stand downs.(11:19-12:20) (See Attachment #1).

Vice Chairman Bellew: Explain what a stand down is.

Cathy Halgunseth: A stand down is an event that is held for veterans. It is a coalition of agencies that assist veterans. It includes the VA, we, as a department, and other the veteran service organizations. It's to try to get the veterans that haven't come in for services or claims to get them into the system. They give away clothing, give haircuts, give flu shots, and mental health services are there to assist veterans.

Chairman Pollert: Is that under grants benefits and claims?

Cathy Halgunseth: Yes it is.

Rep. Nelson: We don't fund the total cost of stand downs that is a group effort. We augment the funding for stand downs. With the additional \$10,000 dollars are you doubling the number and reaching more communities.

Cathy Halgunseth: That is seed money for groups that are hosting the stand down. It's required for them to go out and get funding. We will sometimes supplement that funding. We have \$100 left for this biennium. We ran out in September.

Rep. Nelson: How many events did you help sponsor with the appropriation and do you fund each event with the same amount of money?

Cathy Halgunseth: We've helped with four stand downs in this biennium. The amounts differ for the events depending on the needs. If it is a larger areas like Bismarck they will need more funding because they have more veterans.

Rep. Silbernagel: Where is the nine staff located?

Cathy Halgunseth: We have seven staff in Fargo. We have two offices in Fargo. In Bismarck, we have one of our staff and now also have SAA in that office.

Rep. Silbernagel: What is the rent comparison between the Fargo and Bismarck offices?

Cathy Halgunseth: In Fargo, we have 2,485 sq. ft. at \$11 per square foot. In Bismarck, the square footage is 768 sq. ft. at \$14.00 per square foot which in the second year of the biennium will go up to \$15.12.

Rep. Holman: What is the feedback you've gotten on stand downs?

Cathy Halgunseth: The feedback is very positive. It is a good way to reach the marginalized veterans that do not want to come in to a formal agency, especially homeless veterans.

Rep. Nelson: What's the smallest community you've held a stand down in?

Cathy Halgunseth: Bottineau.

Rep. Nelson: How did it go?

Lonnie Wangen: Great. We didn't give them any money because they raised enough.

Rep. Nelson: Do you have the number of veterans that you help during a stand down? I would be interested to know that.

Lonnie Wangen: I have a report on that. I do have the numbers from Bismarck.

Alex Cronquist: Legislative Council. Going back to Representative Bellew's question on that State Approving Agency. In HB1003 which is the Higher Education Bill they took out more money than they are putting in here, about \$13,000 dollars more.

Vice Chairman Bellew: Your IT equipment under \$5000 dollars. You have budgeted this year \$18,900 dollars, you budgeted \$4,800 dollars the first year and you want more money for the next biennium. Are those funds going to be spent and what for?

Cathy Halgunseth: Those dollars will be for replacement computers that we do within the agency. We also do for some of the CVSOs, that we provide laptops to when we can. Some of the counties don't provide a lot of support.

Chairman Pollert: Is there a CVSO in every county or is there some sharing?

Cathy Halgunseth: There are some counties that share a CVSO.

Chairman Pollert: They report to their counties, but not to you.

Cathy Halgunseth: Yes they report to their counties.

Chairman Pollert: Do CVSOs have to have some certain qualifications or training?

Cathy Halgunseth: Right now under Century Code, they need to have their NACVSO accreditation. That is the only training or qualification they need for their position.

Rep. Nelson: There is a health related segment of what the CVSO help with. Health is a major part of what you provide to veterans through the county offices. The access to healthcare is that correct?

Cathy Halgunseth: Yes. The VA is going paperless. Right now we are trying to get the CVSOs to go paperless. So the claims they submit will be sent sooner or it can go to the accredited representative that much quicker. Then the benefits would get to the veterans sooner. They're also able to help veterans sign up for the Healthy Vet, where they can get information and monitor things on themselves.

Rep. Silbernagel: On your funding, it looks like there was no federal funding in previous biennia but there is in 2015-2017.

Cathy Halgunseth: That's correct. This is the first time we are having federal funding come into our agency.

Vice Chairman Bellew: Is that because of the new position?

Cathy Halgunseth: That is correct.

Lonnie Wangen: Commissioner of Veterans Affairs. Read written testimony (See attachment # 2). (27:00-31:25)

Chairman Pollert: Is that in the budget?

Nick Creamer, OMB: That was not in the budget.

Vice Chairman Bellew: Was that an OAR or was that an optional request?

Nick Creamer, OMB: It was an optional request.

Lonnie Wangen: Continued to read written testimony (See attachment # 2a, page 6).(32:10-33:00)

Vice Chairman Bellew: Do you ever switch these vans between communities to even out the mileage?

Lonnie Wangen: Yes we switch them out to get the most years out of them.

Vice Chairman Bellew: If a veteran living in Minot needs to get to the VA, who do they contact?

Lonnie Wangen: You contact your county Veteran service office.

Chairman Pollert: Are they going to be a similar van?

Lonnie Wangen: Those will be quite different. These are 12 and some 7 passenger vans. These vans will be wheel chair accessible. Those vans will be able to go to any medical appointment.

Lonnie Wangen: Continued to read written testimony (See attachment # 2 a, page 6).(35:09-36:59)

Chairman Pollert: What do the stand down events promote?

Lonnie Wangen: If you look at the next two pages, (See Attachment #2a, page 7-9) we have what the Bismarck event looks like they are directories of what went on there. (38:13-39:59)

Lonnie Wangen: Read written testimony - Postwar Trust Fund (See attachment # 2a, page 10) (40:00)-(43:20).

Rep. Silbernagel: Are the grants you are referring to here the same ones that are on your spend down?

Lonnie Wangen: No. This is money that comes directly from the postwar trust fund it is not part of our budget at all.

Rep. Silbernagel: What does a State Approving Agency person do?

Lonnie Wangen: She is here you will meet her today and she will explain that to you.

Chairman Pollert: On the grants given out, those are grants not loans?

Lonnie Wangen: That is correct.

Chairman Pollert: Do you have a loan program?

Lonnie Wangen: Yes, we do have a loan program. It is a total separate fund. We loan the money out with 8% interest, maximum of \$5,000 dollars. When they pay it off in full, they get half of their interest back.

Chairman Pollert: Is there a name for that fund?

Lonnie Wangen: Veteran Aid Fund, Fund 368. That is a set amount of money nothing goes or into that except for the loans.

Chairman Pollert: Approximately how much is in there?

Lonnie Wangen: Approximately \$572, 433.96 That changes each month depending on interest and accounts.

Vice Chairman Bellew: Where did that money come from?

Lonnie Wangen: That was a legislative appropriation or it came from the original Postwar Trust Fund. It is a total separate fund from everything else.

Cathy Halgunseth: That was money that came from a sinking fund. It was used to pay bonuses to returning service people when we got an infusion from Vietnam. That is where the Post War Trust Fund came from.

Chairman Pollert: The revolving line is basically used up and you are just moving that?

Lonnie Wangen: That's correct. We have been down to less than \$20,000 dollars to borrow out and as payment came in then we come back up. Continued to read written testimony.(47:10-47:55) (See attachment #2a page 11-16).

LonnieWangen: Read written testimony - Service dogs (attachment # 2a , page 17-20) (0:48:00)-(49:55).

Chairman Pollert: Out of that was \$25,000 dollars right?

Lonnie Wangen: It was \$50,000; \$12,500 for each dog. The dogs cost much more than that.

Chairman Pollert: Did you put in an OAR for this and it didn't get funded?

Lonnie Wangen: Yes. The Service dogs for America did not get funded. We put in for the \$100,000 dollars because that is where we believed it would be at. You have to go through a lot to get awarded one of these dogs. They are not therapy dogs; they are service dogs. The last question on your list was the total number of suicides in ND of veterans. (See Attachment #2a page 21.) It is a total of 260 since 2001.

Chairman Pollert: Is there a particular age group?

Lonnie Wangen: We're still working on that to get statistics.

Lonnie Wangen: Items in our optional package that wasn't included in our Governor's budget. Such as the increase to the Post War Trust Fund. The fund has been held at \$40 million dollars after the Vietnam war. It was used for many things. It is now at \$4.1 million dollars and has held there for many years. It is determined it can grow, and we want it to grow because the buying dollar just isn't there like 20 years ago and the needs are still there and the interest rates are not as good now. We figured with another \$2 million dollars in there the buying dollar would be there for us and it would grow a little. I think ideally the fund should be at \$10 million dollars. The grant program is not the only program this is for. We want to make sure the most needy are taken care of first. The money is now out. We cannot touch the principal.

Lonnie Wangen: The next is the website upgrade, which I went over with you and the training position. I have been asking for this for a while. We want someone in our office that can dedicate themselves to training CSVOs across the state. We have 53 counties and about 49 Service officers.

Rep. Holman: How big is the staff in the larger counties?

Lonnie Wangen: In Cass county they have 1 service officer and 3 assistants that do claims.

Lonnie Wangen: Continued testimony on CVSO training. (56:35-57:00)

Lonnie Wangen: Testified on veterans with traumatic brain injuries. It is a new program. Medications and holistic treatments have proved very useful. It is a study we are looking at

Chairman Pollert: How much money was the training position and for the study?

Lonnie Wangen: The training was \$135,000 dollars and the study was \$108,000 dollars. If you walk into a county veteran's office the CVSO can help you fill out paper work and get your claim together. Then you pick a power of attorney up at the regional office. They would represent your claim. They will bring it to the federal VA. Legion and Am Vets, DAV, VFW, they have been funding it on their own and their memberships are down. They bring in over \$500 million dollars into ND. We are looking to provide a grant to them to help fund that position so that they stay in ND. We are looking for \$300,000 dollars to provide up to \$50,000 dollars per organization.

Lonnie Wangen: We're looking at \$55,000 for temporary employees. We need to hire someone to help at times temporarily to do research for us and keep us moving forward.

Chairman Pollert: Was that the OAR as well?

Lonnie Wangen: Yes, these were all in the optional package. We have never had marketing or advertising money and it is amazing how many people do not know who the SAA is and that a county officer exists. We want to get the word out to the veterans. We are asking for \$20,000 dollars for that.

Rep. Silbernagel: Last week the federal government rolled out their revamp retirement program for veterans. How might that impact ND veterans?

Lonnie Wangen: I have not reviewed it.

Ronda Schauer: State Approving Agency. Read written testimony (See attachment #3 and 4) (1:03:00)-1:10:24).

Chairman Pollert: What do you mean by approving?

Ronda Schauer: We have approving criteria to approve and supervise the programs of education and training for eligible veterans and dependents.

Vice Chairman Bellew: Are you a federal or state employee?

Ronda Schauer: State.

Vice Chairman Bellew: But we get federal funds to pay your salary?

Ronda Schauer: It is contracted dollars through Veterans Affairs.

Rep. Silbernagel: With the increased economic activity in ND, have you been able to place veterans in job opportunities in ND or are you just looking at local folks?

Ronda Schauer: We are looking at all veterans that come into the state of ND.

Rep. Silbernagel: Veterans from around the country could come to ND because of the opportunities and take advantage of that?

Ronda Schauer: Absolutely.

Rep. Kreidt: In an average year, how many applications do you receive?

Ronda Schauer: For facility applications, it's 10-15 a year. I feel that is due to very few people knowing who we are.

Brenda Bergsrud, Women and Minority Veteran Coordinator testified in support of the bill. I am aware that Representative Trottier has a bill out to fund the Agent Orange meetings. I work to coordinate these meetings. Veterans in Fargo had attended one of our meeting came and thanked me for the meeting to inform them Veterans benefits. (1:14:00).

Chairman Pollert: Do you think the billboards work?

Brenda Bergsrud: I would defer that question to the commissioner.

Chairman Pollert: Or maybe those coming forward today, I was wondering if the billboards work better than meetings to get the word out to the veterans.

Brenda Bergsrud: I enjoy the meetings because it is one on one and we are providing information. What I see at the meetings once a person ask a question than the flood gates open and we get a lot of questions.

Chairman Pollert: It sounds almost like a stand down event except it is for Agent Orange.

Brenda Bergsrud: The Stand downs historically were for homeless veterans. Also the VA will have a stand down that is more of an outreach. We did hold several stand downs this year. I do have the numbers of who attended and also the number that is homeless. Many of these events are coordinated with Project Connect. So if there is a homeless veteran

that we are unable to help as much as we would like, then the community resources are there as well to help.

Rep. Kreidt: What do you mean by homeless?

Brenda Bergsrud: We go by their word if they are. If they truly feel they are homeless we want to connect them to resources so they can move on in their life and provide the resources they need.

Vice Chairman Bellew: How do you get the V on your driver's license?

Brenda Bergsrud: You take your DD 214 into County Veterans Service Officer and they fill out a form and you take that to the DOT and they will put it on.

Rep. Nelson: You must have a lot of clients that don't have that form or a driver's license. What happens when a veteran shows up and has no ID? How do you assist them?

Brenda Bergsrud: We've been running into this very often because of the transient population in the state. Typically if they come to us, we try to find out what state they came from and we work with that state.

Rep. Nelson: How often are you successful?

Brenda Bergsrud: Most of the time. Of the times we are not, there have been people claiming to be veterans that were not.

Rep. Kreidt: Do you ever find a situation where they would be eligible to go into the Veterans' Home?

Brenda Bergsrud: Of course. If there is a situation where we can refer them to the Veterans' Home, we absolutely do.

David Johnson, Adjutant for the ND Department of the American Legion read testimony in support of the bill (See attachment #5) (1:23:00)-(1:29:42).

Jaclyn Hall, Executive Director of Ruth Meiers Hospitality House, read testimony in support of the HB 1025. (See attachment # 6) (1:30:00)-(1:34:03)

Kort Madden: Veteran. Testified in support of HB 1025. He is currently a homeless veteran and is getting help through the Fargo Veteran Administration. There are other veterans out there that don't know there is help for them. It is my hope you will keep this going for the veterans that are not aware of the programs for help. I am currently going through retraining at this time and we do need to keep this program going. It is important to assist other veterans find the help they need.(1:34:00)-(1:37:09)

Rep. Nelson: Thank you for your service to the country. I'm very happy that you're here to share your story of how you became aware of the programs. How did you first learn of the programs?

Kort Madden: I had no idea. I have a heart problem and it put me down and I was unable to do my normal work. I was at Ruth Meier's trying to figure out what to do now. Someone asked me if I was a veteran and then told me of the program. I then met Karen Pearson who was a VA Representative. She started asking me a series of questions about my DD 214 and other paperwork to identify who I was. I did. It was a fluke that got me to this position I am in right now. They were outreaching at the time and that is where I ran into the program.

Rep. Nelson: Where are you from originally?

Kort Madden: I'm from California originally. I was a long distance flagger moving from state to state. I've been here for two years.

Rep. Nelson: What period were you in the service?

Kort Madden: I served from 1978-1982. We had the Iran hostage situation.

Rep. Nelson: Personally, I see Vietnam veterans being the least likely to ask for help. In some of the smaller communities they don't have as many veteran services and we might have to find different ways to get the word to the veterans there. I was interested to find out how you found the program.

Kort Madden: Mine was a fluke because my heart condition kicked in. We are still not sure if it is service related or not. So we don't know what caused my situation. Some of the Vietnam veterans that I know have not gotten the closure they should have after the war. They don't know how to ask for help and during that time there wasn't very much help available.

David Johnson: Veteran: I would like to follow-up. I was a homeless veteran. I was working in Minnesota and got laid off and lost my house the beginning of the housing crisis. I spent a few months in a tent and went to school for 9 months as a dislocated worker. Came back and spent another 5 ½ months in a tent before I obtained my current job. I encourage you to do anything you can to support veteran retraining because homeless is a real issue out there.

Chairman Pollert: adjourned hearing.

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee - Human Resources Division
Sakakawea Room, State Capitol

HB1025
2/12/2015
23763

- Subcommittee
 Conference Committee

Donna Wehman

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the department of veterans' affairs.

Minutes:

Attachment #1 & 2.

Chairman Pollert called the committee to order on HB 1025.

Chairman Pollert: The first thing we'll ask for an amendment on is the base payroll changes the salary increase on the three and three and the health insurance increase. Rep. Holman will you ask for the retirement increase? (See Attachment #1 & 2).

Rep. Holman: Yes I will.

Sean Smith, OMB: The performance will be \$47,370 dollars it breaks down to the general fund is \$38,613 and the federal other funding is \$8,757.

Vice Chairman Bellew: Is the \$17000 the transfer of that FTE from the University System?

Lori Laschkewitsch, OMB: Yes.

Rep. Nelson: I'll move to transfer the FTE from the North Dakota University System to the State Approving Agency.

Chairman Pollert: I'm going to refer to it as SAA.

Rep. Holman: I'm going to put in the stand downs at \$20,000.

Vice Chairman Bellew: Are you doing the extra \$10,000?

Rep. Holman: Yes, I'm moving the extra \$10,000.

Rep. Kreidt: I'll propose a motion for \$5,000 instead of \$10,000 for the stand downs.

Chairman Pollert: Is yours to do half of the amount correct?

Rep. Kreidt: Correct. As long as we are going down to \$15,000 for the van purchase

Chairman Pollert: You're moving the motion to add funding to purchase vans.

Rep. Kreidt: There is some other funding out there that is going to buy them 7 vans.

Chairman Pollert: Two total different bills, two total different vans, two total different areas they serve. Last session we bought them 3 or 4 vans. This session, they have one here because they got a van in a contest. Those vans are used for services in the larger cities. HB1364 deals with a federal grant where the vans will be bought through the DOT procurement process. Those are going to be stationed in highly rural areas. There will be contracted drivers. Those vans will go out to the rural areas to pick up veterans to take them to the VA. Those vans are not the ones we are talking here.

Rep. Kreidt: When they get to 160,000 miles they roll those vans over.

Chairman Pollert: This budget has one of the urban vans plus the other one they received through some sort of lottery. Each van is \$15,000 for these ones used urbanely.

Rep. Kreidt: I'll bring forward the vans.

Chairman Pollert: You're bringing forward the vans and adding the funding for \$15,000 for the vans. There are three reductions in the budget.

Rep. Silbernagel: I'd propose an amendment to shift those three credit balances to the right.

Rep. Holman: I'm going to move to leave the \$50,000 for Agent Orange in.

Vice Chairman Bellew: There is a bill in full appropriations that increased that to \$100,000.

Rep. Holman: OK, I'll remove my motion.

Chairman Pollert: Is there leftover money from the PTSD dogs?

Lori Laschkewitsch, OMB: Yes there is because they have one dog ready to be assigned and none have been assigned yet. They should have the remainder of the \$50,000 if they purchase this one for \$12,500. I would be surprised if they have the opportunity to spend the rest of the money in the next 6 months.

Chairman Pollert: My motion would be to keep last biennium's unspent authority so they can carry over.

Lori Laschkewitsch, OMB: There could be language written and I can help you. It just exempts that amount of money from turn back at the end of the biennium.

Chairman Pollert: Would we have to reduce that \$50,000 amount?

Lori Laschkewitsch, OMB: You would have to reduce that amount because it is in there current budget. If you didn't take it out it would stay there. You would need to reduce it in this amendment the full \$50,000. The carryover language doesn't have an actual appropriation it is just at the end of the biennium when you reconcile the books you can carry over what is left. Is it ok with the committee?

Rep. Nelson: Are we going to strike Rep. Silbernagel's made to?

Chairman Pollert: No, that will stay in.

Rep. Nelson: We're going to strike the motion to move it to the right?

Chairman Pollert: No.

Rep. Holman: We're accepting the Governor's proposal.

Vice Chairman Bellew: Do we need language in this bill to encourage the director of this agency to apply for federal funds when they are available? I know there are federal funds available for homeless veterans. Can we just verbally tell him that or?

Chairman Pollert: I wish I had an idea.

Lori Laschkewitsch, OMB: You could add federal authority to their budget for a particular amount like \$10 or \$20 thousand if you want to stand down as federal authority and then use legislative intent language that states that federal authority is for them to secure federal grants for stand down events.

Vice Chairman Bellew: In that case, can you work that up? If they can't get the federal grants, then they can have the general funds.

Chairman Pollert: Are you talking about whether it's the \$ 5,000 or \$10,000 we will have besides the \$10,000 in the base.

Vice Chairman Bellew: Yes, the full amount.

Rep. Nelson: I will support that motion. What I have learned of these stand down events, the federal stand down events have to have a homeless component to it. That by definition the 4 major cities should look at federal money before they look at state money. Bismarck takes most of the state money. I don't think it's a Lonnie problem. There is a particular reason why the veterans choose to apply for those dollars before the federal. Either way, I

think this motion might address it. I would like to ask the question to the veterans from Bismarck as to why they don't go after the federal money first. Then it would leave some money for the more rural areas.

Vice Chairman Bellew: Do you know what I want and you will work on that language?

Sean Smith: I think so. We'll work on it.

Chairman Pollert: The first motion we will do roll call on is the base payroll, changes, three and three and the health insurance changes.

A Roll Call Vote was taken. Yes: 6 No: 0 Absent: 0. Motion Carried.

Chairman Pollert: Representative Holman's motion on the retirement increase.

A Roll Call Vote was taken. Yes: 1 No: 5 Absent: 0. Motion failed.

Chairman Pollert: Representative Nelson transfer from FTE to SAA.

A Roll Call Vote was taken. Yes: 4 No: 2 Absent: 0. Motion carried.

Chairman Pollert: Representative Silbernagel motion for operating expenses, agent orange and the service dog grants.

A Roll Call Vote was taken. Yes: 6 No: 0 Absent: 0. Motion Carried.

Chairman Pollert: Representative Holman increased \$10,000 for stand down events. Any discussion? The clerk will call the roll.

A Roll Call Vote was taken. Yes: 1 No: 5 Absent: 0. Motion fails.

Chairman Pollert: Representative Kreidt motion for \$5,000 for stand down events.

A Roll Call Vote was taken. Yes: 5 No: 1 Absent: 0. Motion Carried.

Chairman Pollert: Representative Kreidt motion to add funding of \$15,000 to purchase van. Any discussion? Seeing none.

A Roll Call Vote was taken. Yes: 6 No: 0 Absent: 0. Motion carried.

Chairman Pollert: A motion for language on carry over dollars of \$13,050 for the PTSD dogs to keep the carry over.

A Roll Call Vote was taken. Yes: 6 No: 0 Absent: 0. Motion Carried.

Chairman Pollert: Representative Bellew's motion about federal dollars for stand downs. It will be written up by Shawn and Representative Bellew. Is everyone comfortable with taking that vote today? Seeing no objection.

A Roll Call Vote was taken. Yes: 6 No: 0 Absent: 0. Motion Carried.

Lori Laschkewitsch, OMB: Were you going to put an amount for the federal authority if they can get those grants? You would actually have to put an amount into the budget.

Vice Chairman Bellew: Yes.

Rep. Nelson: We don't know what amount of federal dollars they are applying for. What are they using now? Fargo isn't applying for the state dollars they are applying for federal dollars.

Rep. Holman: Are we authorizing that we would cover a grant that hasn't been granted with this type of motion? I just don't want to make the state cover dollars if the grant from the federal government isn't given.

Vice Chairman Bellew: No.

Chairman Pollert: Any further discussion? Seeing none. Closed the hearing on HB 1025.

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee - Human Resources Division
Sakakawea Room, State Capitol

HB1025
2/16/2015
23906

Subcommittee
 Conference Committee

Donna Whetham

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the department of veterans' affairs.

Minutes:

Attachment # 1.

Chairman Pollert called the committee to order HB 1025. We have in front of us the proposed amendments. (See attachment # 1).

Chairman Pollert: We need to have the carryover language for the PTSD dogs and some language for federal dollars for stand downs.

Vice Chairman Bellew: I just wanted to encourage the head of this department to get as many federal dollars as he can for stand-downs because I know they are there. We wouldn't have to put that in the bill.

Chairman Pollert: We voted on it.

Vice Chairman Bellew: Then keep it in there.

Chairman Pollert: We voted on language for federal dollars for stand-downs.

Sheila Peterson: What do we need to add?

Chairman Pollert: The language for federal dollars for stand downs and also the carryover dollars for the 2015-2017 biennium for the PTSD dogs.

Vice Chairman Bellew: To just encourage the director to search for federal dollars for stand downs.

Sheila Peterson: So it would be Legislative intent language?

Vice Chairman Bellew: Yes. Intent.

Chairman Pollert: Those were voted on last Friday, but aren't included in these amendments. Representative Holman do you have a problem with voting on this or anyone else? We know this will have the language added in for the PTSD dogs and the federal stand-downs.

Representative Holman: No.

Representative Kreidt: Motion for Do Pass as Amended to HB 1025.

Representative Silbernagel: seconded.

Vice Chairman Bellew: This represents a 4.39% increase in general fund spending.

Chairman Pollert: The transfer is other funds not general funds.

Vice Chairman Bellew: It's carover dollars.

Rep. Nelson: No the transfer of the FTEs.

Vice Chairman Bellew: That is not general funds.

A Roll Call Vote was taken. Yes: 5 No: 1 Absent: 0. Motion Carried.

Representative Kreidt: will carry the bill.

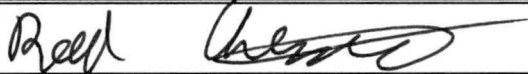
2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee
Roughrider Room, State Capitol

HB 1025
2/18/2015
24103

- Subcommittee
 Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature



Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

Provide an appropriation for defraying expenses of Department of Veterans Affairs

Minutes:

Representative Kreidt: Explained the amendment. This is the Veterans Affairs budget. We increased money for stand downs for \$5,000, and we allowed the purchase of 1 van for \$15,000. Agent Orange was moved to \$50,000, and service dogs were moved to \$37,500 for the continuation of service dog training.

Representative Kreidt: Motioned to accept amendment;

Representative Pollert: Seconded the motion.

Chairman Jeff Delzer: Why is the Agent Orange included in the amendment?

Representative Pollert: The \$100K, you had to pull that out; that's why you see the negative. It was for the Agent Orange & service dogs.

Chairman Jeff Delzer: Why was it in the budget?

Representative Monson: What kind of van can you buy for \$15,000?

Representative Kreidt: They have a reduced price vehicle they can get for VA.

Representative Schmidt: Looking at the green sheet; what's the \$13,000 difference.

Chairman Jeff Delzer: That is the pay difference

Voice Vote: the Aye's have it.

Motion Carries

Representative Kreidt: Makes Motion for a Do Pass as Amended

Representative Nelson: Seconded

Roll Call Vote: 23 Yes, 0 No, 0 Absent.

Motion Carries

Rep. Kreidt: Carries the Bill.

Handwritten:
2-19-15
1 of 2

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1025

Page 1, line 2, after "affairs" insert "; and to provide an exemption"

Page 1, replace lines 12 through 18 with:

"Veterans' affairs	\$1,410,580	\$342,071	\$1,752,651
Transport vans	0	15,000	15,000
Accrued leave payments	<u>10,123</u>	<u>(10,123)</u>	<u>0</u>
Total all funds	\$1,420,703	\$346,948	\$1,767,651
Less estimated income	<u>0</u>	<u>284,453</u>	<u>284,453</u>
Total general fund	\$1,420,703	\$62,495	\$1,483,198
Full-time equivalent positions	8.00	1.00	9.00"

Page 2, after line 4, insert:

"SECTION 3. EXEMPTION. The amount appropriated for veteran service dog training in section 1 of chapter 60 of the 2013 Session Laws is not subject to section 54-44.1-11 and any unexpended funds from this line item for grants are available for grants during the biennium beginning July 1, 2015, and ending June 30, 2017.

SECTION 4. CONTINGENT FUNDING - STAND DOWN EVENTS. The department of veterans' affairs shall seek federal funds of at least \$20,000 for defraying the expenses of veterans' stand down events. The department may spend up to \$15,000 from the general fund appropriated in section 1 of this Act only to the extent that the department does not receive \$20,000 in federal funding for the stand down events during the 2015-17 biennium."

Renumber accordingly

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT:

House Bill No. 1025 - Department of Veterans' Affairs - House Action

	Base Budget	House Changes	House Version
Veterans' Affairs	\$1,410,580	\$342,071	\$1,752,651
Accrued leave payments	10,123	(10,123)	
Transport Vans		15,000	15,000
Total all funds	\$1,420,703	\$346,948	\$1,767,651
Less estimated income	0	284,453	284,453
General fund	\$1,420,703	\$62,495	\$1,483,198
FTE	8.00	1.00	9.00

Department No. 321 - Department of Veterans' Affairs - Detail of House Changes

	Adds Funding for Base Payroll Changes ¹	Adds Funding for Salary and Benefit Increases ²	Transfers State Approving Agency ³	Adjusts Operating Expenses ⁴	Increases Funding for Stand Downs ⁵	Adds Funding to Purchase Vans ⁶
Veterans' Affairs	\$80,367	\$86,228	\$275,696	(\$5,220)	\$5,000	
Accrued leave payments	(10,123)					
Transport Vans						15,000

202

Total all funds	\$70,244	\$86,228	\$275,696	(\$5,220)	\$5,000	\$15,000
Less estimated income	0	8,757	275,696	0	0	0
General fund	\$70,244	\$77,471	\$0	(\$5,220)	\$5,000	\$15,000
FTE	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

	Removes Grants⁷	Total House Changes
Veterans' Affairs	(\$100,000)	\$342,071
Accrued leave payments		(10,123)
Transport Vans		15,000
Total all funds	(\$100,000)	\$346,948
Less estimated income	0	284,453
General fund	(\$100,000)	\$62,495
FTE	0.00	1.00

¹ Funding is added for cost-to-continue 2013-15 biennium salaries and benefit increases and for other base payroll changes.

² The following funding is added for 2015-17 biennium performance salary adjustments of 2 to 4 percent per year and increases in monthly health insurance premiums:

	General Fund	Other Funds	Total
Salary increase - Performance	\$38,613	\$8,757	\$47,370
Health insurance increase	38,858	0	38,858
Total	\$77,471	\$8,757	86,228

³ Federal funding for the state approving agency and 1 FTE position is transferred from the North Dakota University System.

⁴ Funding for operating expenses is adjusted.

⁵ Funding for stand down events is increased to provide a total of \$15,000.

⁶ Funding is added to purchase vans to transport veterans to medical appointments.

⁷ Funding for the following grants authorized during the 2013-15 biennium is removed:

	General Fund	Other Funds	Total
Agent Orange	(\$50,000)	\$0	(\$50,000)
Service dog training	(50,000)	0	(50,000)
Total	(\$100,000)	\$0	(\$100,000)

This amendment also adds or changes sections:

- Authorizing the department to continue unexpended 2013-15 biennium appropriations for the veteran service dog training program.
- Directing the agency to seek federal funds for veterans' stand down events of at least \$20,000 and providing that the department may spend the \$15,000 provided from the general fund for stand down events only to the extent that it does not receive the \$20,000 of federal funding.

Base payroll
3+3

Date: 2/17/15
Roll Call Vote #: "Enter Vote #"

Ins.

**2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. "Enter Bill/Resolution No." HB 1025**

House Appropriations - Human Resources Division Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: Base payroll, 3+3, health insurance increase

Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
 Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
 As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
 Place on Consent Calendar

Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By _____ Seconded By _____

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Pollert	X		Rep. Holman	X	
Vice Chairman Bellew	X				
Rep. Kreidt	X				
Rep. Nelson	X				
Rep. Silbernagel	X				

Total Yes 6 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Motion carries.

retirement inc.

Date: 2/12/15
Roll Call Vote #: "Enter Vote #" 2

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. "Enter Bill/Resolution No." HB1025

House Appropriations - Human Resources Division Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: retirement increase

- Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
 Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
 As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
 Place on Consent Calendar
Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By Rep Holman Seconded By _____

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Pollert		X	Rep. Holman	X	
Vice Chairman Bellew		X			
Rep. Kreidt		X			
Rep. Nelson		X			
Rep. Silbernagel		X			

Total Yes 1 No 5

Absent 0

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

motion failed.

transfer FTE

Date: Click here to enter a date.
Roll Call Vote #: "Enter Vote #" 2/12/15

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. "Enter Bill/Resolution No." HB 1025

House Appropriations - Human Resources Division Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: Transfer from FTE to SAA.

- Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
- Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
- As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
- Place on Consent Calendar
- Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By Rep. Nelson Seconded By _____

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Pollert	X		Rep. Holman		X
Vice Chairman Bellew		X			
Rep. Kreidt	X				
Rep. Nelson	X				
Rep. Silbernagel	X				

Total Yes 4 No 2

Absent 0

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Motion carried.

op. ex.
ag. orange
Service dogs

2/12/15
Date: Click here to enter a date.
Roll Call Vote #: "Enter Vote #"
4

4

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. "Enter Bill/Resolution No." HB 1025

House Appropriations - Human Resources Division Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: operating expenses, agent orange, service dog.

Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
 Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
 As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
 Place on Consent Calendar

Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By Rep. Silbernagel Seconded By _____

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Pollert	X		Rep. Holman	X	
Vice Chairman Bellew	X				
Rep. Kreidt	X				
Rep. Nelson	X				
Rep. Silbernagel	X				

Total Yes 6 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Motion passes.

10,000 stand down

Date: 2/12/15
Roll Call Vote #: "Enter Vote #"
#5

5

**2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. "Enter Bill/Resolution No." HB 1025**

House Appropriations - Human Resources Division Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: \$10,000 increase for stand down events

Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
 Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
 As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
 Place on Consent Calendar

Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By Rep. Holman Seconded By _____

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Pollert		X	Rep. Holman	X	
Vice Chairman Bellew		X			
Rep. Kreidt		X			
Rep. Nelson		X			
Rep. Silbernagel		X			

Total Yes 1 No 5

Absent 0

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Motion fails

stand down 5,000

Date: 2/12/15
Roll Call Vote #: "Enter Vote #"
6

**2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. "Enter Bill/Resolution No." HB 1025**

House Appropriations - Human Resources Division Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: \$5000 for stand down events

Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
 Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
 As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
 Place on Consent Calendar
Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By Rep Kreidt Seconded By _____

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Pollert	X		Rep. Holman	X	
Vice Chairman Bellew		X			
Rep. Kreidt	X				
Rep. Nelson	X				
Rep. Silbernagel	X				

Total Yes 5 No 1

Absent 0

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Motion Passes.

Van 15,000

Date: Click here to enter a date.
Roll Call Vote #: "Enter Vote #"

**2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. "Enter Bill/Resolution No." HB1025**

House Appropriations - Human Resources Division Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: adds funding of 15,000 for Van

- Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
- Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
- As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
- Place on Consent Calendar
- Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By Rep Kreidt Seconded By _____

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Pollert	X		Rep. Holman	X	
Vice Chairman Bellew	X				
Rep. Kreidt	X				
Rep. Nelson	X				
Rep. Silbernagel	X				

Total Yes 6 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

motion carried.

Date: Click here to enter a date.
Roll Call Vote #: "Enter Vote #"

*language on carry over
for PTSD dogs*

**2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. "Enter Bill/Resolution No." *HB1025***

House Appropriations - Human Resources Division Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: *language on carry over dollars for PTSD dogs*

- Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
 Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
 As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
 Place on Consent Calendar
- Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By *Rep. Pollert* Seconded By _____

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Pollert	X		Rep. Holman	X	
Vice Chairman Bellew	X				
Rep. Kreidt	X				
Rep. Nelson	X				
Rep. Silbernagel	X				

Total Yes 6 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Motion carried.

fed. \$ for stand downs

Date: 2/12/16
Roll Call Vote #: "Enter Vote #"9

9

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. "Enter Bill/Resolution No." HB1025

House Appropriations - Human Resources Division Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: federal dollars for stand downs

- Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
- Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
- As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
- Place on Consent Calendar
- Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By Rep. Bellew Seconded By _____

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Pollert	X		Rep. Holman	X	
Vice Chairman Bellew	X				
Rep. Kreidt	X				
Rep. Nelson	X				
Rep. Silbernagel	X				

Total Yes 6 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Motion carried.

Date: Click here to enter a date. 2/16/15
 Roll Call Vote #: "Enter Vote #" 1

**2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
 ROLL CALL VOTES
 BILL/RESOLUTION NO. "Enter Bill/Resolution No." HR 1025**

House Appropriations - Human Resources Division Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: _____

Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
 Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
 As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
 Place on Consent Calendar
 Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By Rep. Kreidt Seconded By Rep. Silbernagel

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Pollert	X		Rep. Holman	X	
Vice Chairman Bellew		X			
Rep. Kreidt	X				
Rep. Nelson	X				
Rep. Silbernagel	X				

Total Yes 5 No 1

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Rep. Kreidt

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Motion carried

Date: 2/18/15

Roll Call Vote #: 1

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1025

House Appropriations Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: 15.8133, 01002

Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
 Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
 As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
 Place on Consent Calendar
Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By: Rep. Kreidt Seconded By: Rep. Pollert

Representatives	Yes	No	Absent	Representatives	Yes	No	Absent	Representatives	Yes	No	Absent
Chairman Jeff Delzer				Representative Nelson				Representative Boe			
Vice Chairman Keith Kempenich				Representative Pollert				Representative Glassheim			
Representative Bellew				Representative Sanford				Representative Guggisberg			
Representative Brandenburg				Representative Schmidt				Representative Hogan			
Representative Boehning				Representative Silbernagel				Representative Holman			
Representative Dosch				Representative Skarphol							
Representative Kreidt				Representative Streyle							
Representative Martinson				Representative Thoreson							
Representative Monson				Representative Vigessaa							

Totals	
(Yes)	
No	
Absent	
Grand Total	

Voice Vote carries

Floor Assignment: _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent: _____

Date: 2/18/15

Roll Call Vote #: 2

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1025

House Appropriations Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: 15-8133-01002

Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
 Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
 As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
 Place on Consent Calendar

Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By Rep. Kreidt Seconded By: Rep. Nelson

Representatives	Yes	No	Absent	Representatives	Yes	No	Absent	Representatives	Yes	No	Absent
Chairman Jeff Delzer	✓			Representative Nelson	✓			Representative Boe	✓		
Vice Chairman Keith Kempenich	✓			Representative Pollert	✓			Representative Glassheim	✓		
Representative Bellew	✓			Representative Sanford	✓			Representative Guggisberg	✓		
Representative Brandenburg	✓			Representative Schmidt	✓			Representative Hogan	✓		
Representative Boehning	✓			Representative Silbernagel	✓			Representative Holman	✓		
Representative Dosch	✓			Representative Skarphol	✓						
Representative Kreidt	✓			Representative Streyle	✓						
Representative Martinson	✓			Representative Thoreson	✓						
Representative Monson	✓			Representative Vigasaa	✓						

Totals	
Yes)	<u>23</u>
No	<u>0</u>
Absent	<u>0</u>
Grand Total	<u>23</u>

Floor Assignment: Rep. Kreidt

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent: _____

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1025: Appropriations Committee (Rep. Delzer, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS** and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (23 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1025 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 1, line 2, after "affairs" insert "; and to provide an exemption"

Page 1, replace lines 12 through 18 with:

"Veterans' affairs	\$1,410,580	\$342,071	\$1,752,651
Transport vans	0	15,000	15,000
Accrued leave payments	<u>10,123</u>	<u>(10,123)</u>	<u>0</u>
Total all funds	\$1,420,703	\$346,948	\$1,767,651
Less estimated income	<u>0</u>	<u>284,453</u>	<u>284,453</u>
Total general fund	\$1,420,703	\$62,495	\$1,483,198
Full-time equivalent positions	8.00	1.00	9.00"

Page 2, after line 4, insert:

"SECTION 3. EXEMPTION. The amount appropriated for veteran service dog training in section 1 of chapter 60 of the 2013 Session Laws is not subject to section 54-44.1-11 and any unexpended funds from this line item for grants are available for grants during the biennium beginning July 1, 2015, and ending June 30, 2017.

SECTION 4. CONTINGENT FUNDING - STAND DOWN EVENTS. The department of veterans' affairs shall seek federal funds of at least \$20,000 for defraying the expenses of veterans' stand down events. The department may spend up to \$15,000 from the general fund appropriated in section 1 of this Act only to the extent that the department does not receive \$20,000 in federal funding for the stand down events during the 2015-17 biennium."

Renumber accordingly

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT:

House Bill No. 1025 - Department of Veterans' Affairs - House Action

	Base Budget	House Changes	House Version
Veterans' Affairs	\$1,410,580	\$342,071	\$1,752,651
Accrued leave payments	10,123	(10,123)	
Transport Vans		15,000	15,000
Total all funds	\$1,420,703	\$346,948	\$1,767,651
Less estimated income	<u>0</u>	<u>284,453</u>	<u>284,453</u>
General fund	\$1,420,703	\$62,495	\$1,483,198
FTE	8.00	1.00	9.00

Department No. 321 - Department of Veterans' Affairs - Detail of House Changes

	Adds Funding for Base Payroll Changes ¹	Adds Funding for Salary and Benefit Increases ²	Transfers State Approving Agency ³	Adjusts Operating Expenses ⁴	Increases Funding for Stand Downs ⁵	Adds Funding to Purchase Vans ⁶
Veterans' Affairs	\$80,367	\$86,228	\$275,696	(\$5,220)	\$5,000	
Accrued leave payments	(10,123)					
Transport Vans						15,000
Total all funds	\$70,244	\$86,228	\$275,696	(\$5,220)	\$5,000	\$15,000
Less estimated income	<u>0</u>	<u>8,757</u>	<u>275,696</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
General fund	\$70,244	\$77,471	\$0	(\$5,220)	\$5,000	\$15,000
	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

FTE

	Removes Grants ⁷	Total House Changes
Veterans' Affairs	(\$100,000)	\$342,071
Accrued leave payments		(10,123)
Transport Vans		15,000
Total all funds	(\$100,000)	\$346,948
Less estimated income	0	284,453
General fund	(\$100,000)	\$62,495
FTE	0.00	1.00

¹ Funding is added for cost-to-continue 2013-15 biennium salaries and benefit increases and for other base payroll changes.

² The following funding is added for 2015-17 biennium performance salary adjustments of 2 to 4 percent per year and increases in monthly health insurance premiums:

	General Fund	Other Funds	Total
Salary increase - Performance	\$38,613	\$8,757	\$47,370
Health insurance increase	38,858	0	38,858
Total	\$77,471	\$8,757	86,228

³ Federal funding for the state approving agency and 1 FTE position is transferred from the North Dakota University System.

⁴ Funding for operating expenses is adjusted.

⁵ Funding for stand down events is increased to provide a total of \$15,000.

⁶ Funding is added to purchase vans to transport veterans to medical appointments.

⁷ Funding for the following grants authorized during the 2013-15 biennium is removed:

	General Fund	Other Funds	Total
Agent Orange	(\$50,000)	\$0	(\$50,000)
Service dog training	(50,000)	0	(50,000)
Total	(\$100,000)	\$0	(\$100,000)

This amendment also adds or changes sections:

- Authorizing the department to continue unexpended 2013-15 biennium appropriations for the veteran service dog training program.
- Directing the agency to seek federal funds for veterans' stand down events of at least \$20,000 and providing that the department may spend the \$15,000 provided from the general fund for stand down events only to the extent that it does not receive the \$20,000 of federal funding.

2015 SENATE APPROPRIATIONS

HB 1025

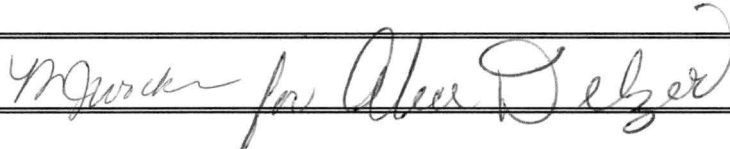
2015 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee
Harvest Room, State Capitol

HB 1025
3/11/2015
Job # 24633

- Subcommittee
 Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature



Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the department of veterans' affairs; and to provide an exemption.

Minutes:

Attachments # 1 - 6

Chairman Holmberg called the committee to order on Wednesday, March 11, 2015, at 9:30 am in regards to HB 1025. All committee members were present. Sean Smith, Legislative Council and Lori Laschkewitsch, OMB was also present.

Lonnie Wangan, Commissioner, Veteran's Affairs of ND Testified in favor of HB 1025 and provided written Testimony Attached # 1- a statement regarding 2015-17 Biennium Appropriation and one-time funding projects for 2013-15 biennium.

Testimony Attached # 2 - 2015-2017 Requested Budget Changes. Agent Orange went through another bill for \$50,000 and it passed. (13.26) He stated the section of the bill # 4, contingent funding, be removed because it ties our hands and makes us less able to take care of our vets.

Senator Carlisle On the Bismarck Stand Down my neighbor is very helpful on that, I see several in the audience from the Bismarck AmVets, how many homeless veterans did we have at our last Stand Down? Do any of you guys know?

Bob Olzweski AMVETS 8 to 10 .

Senator Carlisle Ms. Hall here is from Ruth Meiers and she's been working with the homeless Vets in Bismarck, so I maybe catch her later on. The other thing where does ND Cares fits into this whole budget? You noticed we put money now in another budget, with the First Lady is kind of heading that up. Is there any duplication or is that going to kind of meld together between the two groups, the two different budgets?

Lonnie Wangan I am not sure which budget that is. It is under North Dakota Human Services.

Senator Carlisle I think it is in the Adj General's? Have you looked at what kind of funds of gone into that budget?

Lonnie Wangen It started out with a group with our agency, bringing the care givers of mental health together.

Senator Carlisle the Samsa issue? Lonnie Wangen We were looking at the SAMSA issue and bringing them into the state, and then it kind of expanded from there and the First lady got involved, and Adj. Generals wife got involved. It has become, were not supposed to be care providers, as much as information and coordinators to being the different agencies to coordinate our services is what is supposed to be.

Lonnie Wangen He continued with transportation vans - (18.01) (19.20) included in the Governor's budget.

Senator Robinson Speak of some of the statistics we have with our veterans coming back with PTSD and TBI. What type of numbers are we are looking at? I know our figures are not accurate as there are a lot of folks that don't want to admit that they are struggling with these issues but I know we've got disproportionally a large number of folks in North Dakota that have been through 4-5 tours of duty. Speak to us about the numbers that were looking at?

Lonnie Wangan: With PTSD it is constantly seems to grow as the numbers every year. They look at the percentage. Before about 5 years ago about 25% returning would suffer from PTSD, now they are over 50%, with exactly what you're talking about. The number of people that are being deployed over and over again. Post-traumatic stress who is going to suffer from that. They are all going to bring back some stress and baggage. It is always going to be tough to come back when you're gone for a year no matter where your at, but if you are in a war zone, and you come back to the civilian life, there is a lot of changes to deal with and theres' a lot stress. The disorder usually happens about one year after you are back, where your body hasn't brought your testosterone levels and your flight and risk manic, all these things that are going through your mind all the time. It is not dealt with that in about those levels down so you are still at a heightened awareness, and that is where you start getting these different problems that create a disorder through a chemical imbalance. (20.56) Any loud noise or whatever kind of sets you off, and your highly stressed all the time which is very difficult on your body. It starts causing a lot of mental health because your losing sleep, you can't concentrate and it causes a lot of suicidal thoughts, it has become a disorder. The percentages have been going up because a lot of people have been home longer too, and over the years they are realizing that actually it has become a disorder because I didn't deal with it.

Senator Robinson One I want to talk about the service dogs. First of all you mentioned suicidal incidents. I know our incidents with suicide within our veteran community is really high. Is there anything we can do in terms of special programming to reach out to our veterans to impact that. Boy, that is concerning, that we have that many taking their lives.

Lonnie Wangan: Every 61 minutes there is a suicide in the country. North Dakota is noticeable higher in suicide rates than most states. Since the war started in 2001, were are

over 240. The best that I would do, is not try to duplicate but work with fed VVA, the service dogs are very helpful. I visited with a veteran who stopped in my office not too long ago and he had a dog and he is getting it trained to help him and seeing him with this dog and talking with him is what this dog can do for them. They are signing up for the program. It is a stigma, they don't want that stigma, but having the dog there and the difference it has made in the lives of those veterans that they talk too, is a great step forward for us.

Senator Robinson: You used the word dozens of applications out there. Should we not be doing more on that area to reach more of these folks that a service dog would provide not only that companionship but so much more?

Lonnie Wangan: These dogs are amazing and were hoping on the 30th we will have their graduation. They are a service dog, not a therapy dog; the denial and the stigma are there. The people with a dog they are comfortable with, getting out into work, keeping that alive and the word out about those dogs would be a big step forward.

Senator Gary Lee The fte is a transfer from the university system. I don't see that, in your accounting anywhere. Was that put in last session as an university employee and not your moving that back or what is going on?

Lonnie Wangan What that is the FAA, the state approving agency which is # 3 on my list, Rhonda, that is a transfer, under Higher ed.

Senator Gary Lee So that is a typical transfer back and forth or is this the first time it's going to go?

Lonnie Wangan It will be the first time it has been transferred over. It has been in Higher Ed since it came to ND.

V.Chairman Bowman: That transfer is all federal dollars and you need approval of that and you need the authority to use that?

Lonnie Wangan That was correct. There is no state funding involved with this, it is all federal dollars.

V. Chairman Bowman You just need the authority to use that?

Lonnie Wangan Yes, that is correct.

Rhonda Schauer, Director for the ND State Approving Agency testified in support of HB 1025 and provided written Testimony Attached # 3 and Testimony Attached # 4 - North Dakota State Approving Agency Brochure. (30.29)

Senator Gary Lee Where is this position be housed, where would you be located?

Rhonda Schauer In Bismarck at the VA office and that is on Basin Avenue.

Senator Gary Lee Is that a change or is that where you are currently?

Rhonda Schauer That is where I am currently. I am sharing the office space there now.

Lyle Schuchard, Member of the Legislative Committee of the ND Veterans Coordinating Council (NDVCC) testified in support of HB 1025 and provided written Testimony Attached # 5. There are 22 suicides a day. The NDVCC is asking for a do pass on HB 1025. I would like to touch briefly on the Stand down because the funding has been quite a problem. We have a Central Dakota Stand Down in Bismarck. We've had it for 8 years. Between 2010 and 2014 our average veteran that comes through our Stand Down is around 200 veterans that come through. We used to spend about \$7,000 to 8,000. Right now we're down to \$5 000, and we can put it on. We used to pay rental for vans and we don't do that anymore. Our Honor Guard volunteers our vans, drivers and gas in order to go and pickup veterans, and get them to the Stand Down and take them home again. We had security there, we have our honor guard members volunteer their time; we have ex- police officers and highway patrolmen that provide our security. We don't buy caps and t shirts anymore. We have the volunteers' wives bring their caps and t-shirts from previous years. So we've cut the cost down to about \$5000. The amendment that was made asking the commissioner to apply for a federal grant won't do us any good. The money that he will get is going to be for homeless only. We service 200 veterans a year maybe 8-10 of those are homeless so if he gets the federal money, we can't use that. We can use very, very little of it. We need to get the money that was appropriated to us that we had before. We did apply for federal grants for two years and they got to be the point where they were so cumbersome to get and up until almost the day you held the Stand Down, you didn't know if you got your grant approved or not. So you didn't know if you had the money. We were going on a wing and a prayer and we held the Stand Down anyway and we always managed to get the money and we had the DAV to back us up. They said they would foot the bill if we couldn't get the funds. That Stand Down is how I see them.

Jaclyn Hall, Executive Director of Ruth Meier's Hospitality House in Bismarck, ND testified in support of HB 1025 and provided written Testimony Attached # 6.

Senator Robinson: If you would look at the composite of homeless veterans, talk about that for us, age, long term, short term, food, what about medical services? This thing is pretty complicated.

Jaclyn Hall: We are starting to see some from Iraq, but a lot of them are post Korea, one in general was living in my emergency shelter for almost 2 years. Because of a diagnosis of severe schizophrenia and until he something come into place, we weren't able to place him in an apartment because he didn't have the money coming out of his disability check that would cover the cost for rent. We provide direct care with them even after they are living in our apartments. In terms of medical care we have on representative that is our HUD Batch representative that is a direct liaison with the VA, however, here role has expanded now to service not only Hud vast vulters in Bismarck but in Minot and in Dickinson as well. We were just approved for some VA crisis beds. We do work with sevag, we do work with the local DAV chapter to transfer veterans directly to the VA. We have a contract with Bridging the Dental Gap once someone is eligible for VA medical. They waive the \$50 deposit, and they serve them directly in that capacity. We are working to that but right now it's looking at how do we reduce this amount as this number continues to increase.

Senator Heckaman: On your last bullet point on last page, permanent positions in the Military Service Center. Could you expand a little bit?

Jaclyn Hall: It is my understanding that the military who work in the Military Service Center are not permanent employees. So they are individuals that are ratified every biennium to have a permanent position. We work very closely with them. They work wonderful with us. A lot of the communities don't have military service centers and so that is one additional way that we can continue to support those individuals. If I have a veteran living in an apartment, we can do that outreach. We do have staff that are current NG and veterans as well, so they work very closely with these individuals but that is one of the things we would love to see.

Senator Heckaman So these aren't veteran service officers?

Jaclyn Hall No this is the military service center on Expressway in Bismarck.

Senator Carlisle: What would you be looking for like with the sub-committee? What specifically would help? You named the four big cities, and obviously I am from Bismarck, and am familiar with Ruth Meier's, but what are you looking for specifically that would help the homeless veteran? Food, shelter or how.

Jaclyn Hall: If I had a magic wand to say this is what would help, we would love to be able to work directly with the Veterans Affairs and create additional crisis beds for our veterans. When we create crisis beds we have human services with other facilities. It is a per diem bases. It covers the cost and it allows us to take them right away and get them direct services, get them the additional funds that they needed to able to alleviate any of their obstacles. I would love to see additional Veteran Affairs personal being in our smaller communities. Right now they are very few in Bismarck. The position that was in Bismarck, was transferred to Fargo, and if we could work with them, and do additional outreach having them come in to our facilities, that will truly impact our ability to serve those veterans faster.

Chairman Holmberg closed the hearing on 1025. Subcommittee is Senator Kilzer, Chairman; Senator Bowman and Senator Robinson .

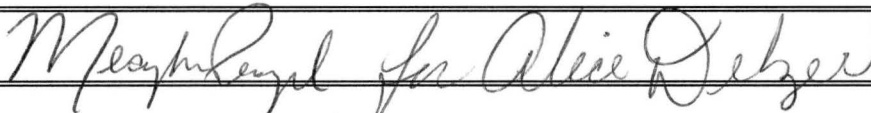
2015 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee
Harvest Room, State Capitol

HB 1025
3/26/2015
Job # 25475

Subcommittee
 Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature



Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A Subcommittee hearing for Veterans' Affairs

Minutes:

1 Attachment

Chairman Kilzer called the subcommittee hearing to order on Thursday, March 26, 2015 at 11:30 am in the Harvest Room. All subcommittee members were present: Chairman Kilzer, Senator Bowman and Senator Robinson. Sean Smith, Legislative Council and Lori Laschkewitsch, OMB were also present.

Lonnie Wangen, Commissioner of Veteran's Affairs (*see attachment #1*)

Wangen: Based on what came out of the House, there was a section that was added to the bill, Section 4, which offers contingent funding for stand down events. The House has lowered the \$20,000 for stand downs to \$15,000 and they put the stipulation that we need to file to seek federal funds of at least \$20,000 for defraying the expenses of stand down events. This is federal dollars that go to the Department of Labor. The stand down events for the funding of these is for homeless veterans only. It's a lot of paper work and stipulations that come along with those. The Department of Veterans' Affairs has never filed for one of those grants; it is normally done by those that are actually put on the stand downs. All we do is provide up to \$5,000 in seed money just to say that we are guarantee \$5,000 in expenses, go out and get your donations, do your fundraising, and put on your event. If you run short, we will cover up to \$5,000 with the hopes that they won't need our \$5,000. Fargo doesn't come to us anymore because they have ongoing fundraising and do quite well. Bismarck has had some problems with filing for the federal department of labor one because the stipulations are to only serve homeless veterans. The stand downs are not just for the homeless in North Dakota. It's for any veteran in need. Many of them are low income and may be on the break of homelessness but not actually classified as such. Section 4 harms our ability to put on stand downs and support those.

Senator Kilzer: Do you have an amendment for us to consider?

Lonnie: The amendment would be to remove Section 4, the contingent funding.. It ties our hands and I don't believe that \$15,000 would even get used. We wouldn't be able to support the stand downs because the stand down events aren't just for homeless veterans.

Senator Kilzer: had you requested the House to do so?

Lonnie: I didn't request the House to put it in there; we had no idea they were considering that amendment.

Lonnie: The amount of money that is in the Post War Trust Fund currently is close to \$5.8M. the interest income that we had last biennium is what we are using in the current biennium. We are down to the most basic of our programs, the grant program, which has also been cut down. We are already running out of funds. We anticipated this in 2008 when the interest rates went down. We are still seeking that \$2M to help balance that out.

Senator Robinson: Where is that fund invested now, is that through the state?

Lonnie: That is through the Treasurer's Office,

Senator Robinson: in a mixed portfolio I'm sure, it's not in CDs correct?

Lonnie: It's a mixed portfolio through Edward Jones and there are a few CDs just as a stabilizer.

Lonnie: The State Approving Agency on # 3 is already included in our budget. That was all federal funding. It's simply moving from Higher Ed to us. It's been included in the Governor's Budget and the House has kept it there.

Senator Kilzer: so there is no more action that we need to do on that one?

Lonnie: Correct

Lonnie: With the website upgrade on #6, we could do without the maps if money is a big issue. We are working on trying to figure out a way to use a map quest or something of the sort to bypass having ITD do it and hopefully save us some money.

Number 7 is the temp employees. That is important for us since we have many projects going on. That's not an FTE so it's a little bit cheaper for us.

The service dogs for veterans with PTSD outlined on number 8 is a program that has been funded this biennium. We have awarded one dog already and we have seven more applications in that we have reviewed and authorized. Hopefully the funding for that will be taken care of this biennium. It's only \$50,000, but it does make a big difference in the lives of those veterans. The organization is doing fundraising to offset the remaining cost of the dogs that is not covered by what this grant covers, and I would like you to consider us continuing this important program.

Senator Robinson: With this amount of money and other dollars that are raised, how many dogs will we be able to place?

Lonnie: With the stipulation that was put on the service dogs during this session, it was for 4 dogs- \$12,500 per dog is what they allowed.

Senator Robinson: but we have 7 already signed up?

Lonnie: There are others who won't get a dog through this program, so we will go through the 7 and award 4. There will be some qualified and needy veterans that will be turned away this biennium for lack of funding.

Lonnie: The Agent Orange Outreach on #9 has another bill that was put in by Representative Trottier. That part doesn't need to be considered in our budget.

The transportation vans on #11 were included in the House budget. We have reduced that down to \$15,000 from the 30 we had in there. That is because we have replaced enough vans and that will be just fine.

We've never had any money for marketing to put out any kind of advertising, and we would like a small amount so we can get the word out to our returning veterans. With the suicide rates of 22 every day across the nation and North Dakota being one of the highest states, it is important for us to reach out to them as quickly as we can.

Lastly is the treatment study for veterans with traumatic brain injuries. That is a separate organization from us.

Senator Kilzer: There is House Bill 1046 that will address the costs relating to traumatic brain injury that will be heard on April 1st.

Senator Kilzer: With the 13 points that you reviewed, are they on the green sheet to show us what the House did on each one of those requests?

Lonnie: I'm not sure that they are on the green sheet.

Senator Kilzer: It looks like they did act on some of them, but did they act on all of them?

Lonnie: They acted on number 3, the state approving agency. They just kept it in the budget and the Governor included that. They reduced stand downs by \$5,000 and added section 4. The transportation vans remained the same. They kept that in at the \$15,000. That is all they acted on.

Senator Robinson: We need to check with the majority office and see what the decision will be on equity. That is floating out there and impacts these budgets.

Also we should find a little more money for the dogs. If we have 7 veterans already waiting and we can only take care of 5 of them, we are not looking at big-time money and the return seems to be significant for those other veterans who have to wait.

Senator Kilzer: I haven't heard on equity. I've just heard that it is still open. The winners and loser will have to be picked by leadership. There certainly are some agencies that are suffering more than others. It seems like just about every agency is affected by some of the compression and both types of equity. We will keep it in mind.

Senator Kilzer closed the hearing on HB 1025.

2015 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee Harvest Room, State Capitol

HB 1025
4/6/2015
Job # 25828 (24:22)

- Subcommittee
 Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature

Handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marjorie Pez".

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

This is a subcommittee conference call on the budget of the veterans' affairs.

Minutes:

1 Attachment

Legislative Council - Sean Smith
OMB - Becky Deichert

Senator Kilzer called the sub-committee to order on HB 1025. Senator Bowman and Senator Robinson were also present.

Senator Kilzer went through the 13 points and picked out priorities.

Senator Kilzer: First is the trust fund. The House had turned down your request and with our present budget situation, I don't think it will work to add anything more. I would choose not to add to that principle at the present time.

Secondly is the powers of attorney. You stated that American Legion, the VFW and the disabled American Veterans were finding it more difficult to provide that service for veterans and that it would take about \$300,000. That is also one in which we are having difficulties for us to fund.

The third item is your State Approving Agency and including an additional FTE from the Higher Ed. I agree with that. That would bring your FTEs up to 9 correct?

Lonnie Wangen, Commissioner, North Dakota Veterans' Affairs (by conference call)

Lonnie: I think it brings it up to 8. That is one state FTE that is federally funded.

Senator Kilzer: How many years ago was it that we added a female FTE?

Lonnie: That was 2007 when that position was added.

Senator Kilzer: The fourth item is the salary equity funding. You had requested \$96,000, the executive budget had in \$55,000 but it was removed by the House. I would request that we put that back for the targeted equity of \$55,000.

Number 5 is a new FTE for a training position for \$135,000 that you had requested. The County Veterans Service officers had to become certified just a few years ago. Would this

be their continuing training that you are referring to by an FTE on your staff then? They wouldn't be going away annually for their training but rather receiving it in the state?

Lonnie: This CVSO training person would concentrate 70% of their time here to ensure all of the CVSOs are trained properly to continue their continued education units and their initial training. When a new CVSO comes on board, they get the initial training then get signed up for the national training. They do the training in the state and make sure it is maintained at an appropriate level.

Senator Kilzer: Would this take care of all of the annual training so that the CVSOs wouldn't have to leave the state? Would they still have to go to their conventions?

Lonnie: No, they are not required to go to their conventions. They can take our state training. We provide 16 credit units in the spring and the fall training. They would have two opportunities to meet the minimum needed.

Senator Kilzer: Would that save somebody some money?

Lonnie: It would save them money from not having to go out of state and also our taxpayers.

Senator Kilzer: Did you ask for this in the executive budget?

Lonnie: This position was asked for in executive, but it has not been approved by the House or the Governor.

Senator Kilzer: This request was turned down by both the executive and the House?

Lonnie: Correct.

Senator Kilzer: I would also vote against adding that position.

Senator Kilzer: Item 6 is your website update. You had a request in for \$60,000.

Lonnie: We're close to finishing our website. There are bids from ITD (*see attachment #1*). We don't have mapping features. There were two separate mapping features. One is a state map broken down by counties. We can use that for people that are looking for certain services such as mental health. They can bring up that map, choose their county and a list will show up. The other feature was a mapped feature of the whole state in which you would put in your zip code and the service you were looking for, and it will put in little balloon marks on all of the legitimate organizations that can provide those services to you. If this part can't be approved, I ask that at least the remaining amounts to take care of the little things in our website be approved.

Senator Kilzer: How much would the collection of small items amount to? You said the total was \$60,000 and the major part was the mapping ideas, but how much would this be?

Lonnie: I'd have to visit with ITD to see how that has changed. It would drop it down substantially. That way we can at least finish up what we have on our website and look at other options for mapping features like MapQuest.

Senator Kilzer: Item 7 is the temporary employees.

Lonnie: This goes into the many different projects we have going on. We are a small agency and it would be nice to hire a temp to come in and assist us or continue on some of these programs like the veteran's court or our DD214 project. We've been working with

internships as much as we can, but it would be nice to have the authorization and funding to get something like that going.

Senator Kilzer: Was that turned down by both the Governor and the House?

Lonnie: Correct. There was no temporary funding by either one.

Senator Kilzer: Presently I would not vote for this.

(10:55) **Senator Kilzer:** Item 8 is the service dogs. Has there been any change since your testimony?

Lonnie: We had a meeting and approved funding for other dogs for veterans. We have quite a few more applications that are qualified, eligible and deserving. Economically they need the funding and assistance. That is one that I feel very strongly and would like to continue with that. I plan to work with the federal VA to show what can be done. Hopefully they will be able to pick up these programs from us. Right now the dogs are doing a great job and making a difference in the lives of these veterans.

Senator Kilzer: Last biennium you were given \$50,000. How much have you spent of that?

Lonnie: We don't pay for them until the veteran graduates. We have one who has gone through the whole training and has paid. We have awarded dogs to 3 others. It's a 60 days of training that they have to conduct themselves before they get their dogs. We are obligated to pay the organization for those who do pass. The \$50,000 will be spent more than likely before session is over or the end of this biennium.

Senator Bowman: This project is very important; this is money well spent.

Senator Kilzer: What are the obligations you've committed to in the coming biennium?

Lonnie: The total amount we've committed to is the \$50,000. According to the parameters that were given to us, it is \$12,500 per dog that we could grant to a veteran for a total of 4 dogs.

Senator Kilzer: You would like an item for \$50,000 put in the upcoming budget?

Lonnie: Yes, very much so.

Senator Kilzer: We will support that.

(15:15) **Senator Kilzer:** Item 9 is the Agent Orange. There was \$50,000 put into that in the present biennium, and you would like \$50,000 again. How is that spent?

Lonnie: This was put in our budget at the end of last biennium when I visited with the appropriations people in both chamber. They suggested that items like this get put into our budget. Representative Trottier put together HB 1372 to add \$50,000 for Agent Orange and that has passed both chambers. It is being funded at \$50,000, and the Senate added another \$25,000 from the Environment and Range Land Protection fund.

Senator Kilzer: You're asking for \$50,000 from either source?

Lonnie: We did not expect Representative Trottier to put in a separate bill, so we put this in our budget.

Senator Kilzer: Should we leave this out?

Lonnie: That is your choice. It was not our intention to try to trick you in extra funding.

Senator Kilzer: We probably won't need this one.

Lonnie: I would agree.

Senator Kilzer: Item 10 is the stand down. This is a \$20,000 request. The House added that the feds have to kick in the first part of it?

Lonnie: It was included in the Governor's budget at \$20,000. The House reduced it down to \$15,000 and then added the request that we must apply for the federal department of labor stand down grant before we can use this funding. The \$20,000 has been there and that is what we have used for many bienniums. We have been fortunate that we don't always use the full amount. This last session they dropped it down to \$10,000 and we ran out after the first year, so we had no funding for the second year. That is a problem.

Furthermore by adding that requirement, if you file for the Department of Labor stand down, that stand down requires that it is used only for homeless veterans, which would knock the number of participants down to maybe a dozen. The way they do it now, they open it up to homeless and any other needy veterans. By adding that section, it will hinder us from serving our veterans for stand downs and eliminate a couple of stand downs in the state because of all the extra paperwork that they would have to go through. Lyle Schuchard could speak more to the stand downs.

Senator Robinson: They are struggling keeping these stand downs going and restrictions aren't going to make it any easier. That would be unfortunate

Senator Bowman: I agree.

Senator Kilzer: we will put in the amendment to leave out the restriction by the federal government that the House included and put it at \$20,000?

Lonnie: That would be good.

Senator Kilzer: We will meet tomorrow.

Senator Kilzer adjourns the subcommittee meeting on HB 1025.

2015 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee
Harvest Room, State Capitol

HB 1025
4/7/2015
Job # 25881

Subcommittee
 Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature

Kathie Oliver for Alice Dehner

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A Subcommittee for Veterans' Affairs

Minutes:

Attachment # 1

Chairman Kilzer called the subcommittee hearing to order on Tuesday, April 07, 2015 at 3:30 in the Senate Conference Room. All subcommittee members were present: Chairman Kilzer, Senator Bowman and Senator Robinson. Sean Smith, Legislative Council and Lori Laschkewitsch, OMB was also present.

Sean Smith: Legislative Council. Reviewed some of the first 10 requests from Attachment # 1, 2015-2017 Requested Budget Changes.

Lonnie Wangen, Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs: On # 6, the ITD website, you were going to look at that.

Senator Kilzer: I did receive a handout. Your request was for \$60,935 for this project and we have not discussed it but I have looked at it carefully. It would be my vote not to fund this at this time but I welcome comments from the rest of the committee.

Senator Robinson: the other day we talked about there was a \$60,935 request and the testimony served us right we didn't need anything close to that. Are you talking no funding or reduced funding?

V.Chairman Bowman: if these were for young vets I think that it would be very important.

Senator Kilzer: Is there training and instruction and demand. Are there a lot of requests?

Lonnie Wangen: I didn't bring up the stats but the amount of people using our website is growing quite a bit, we have Facebook and twitter, it has been helpful; the big item to create the map features, and helps the counties with their service officers. I would rather look on the outside at map?

Senator Kilzer: Is there a cheaper way to go, \$60,000 seems high.

Lonnie Wangen: It seems high myself but that was the bid I got. Another \$10,000 or %15,000 would make a big difference on finishing up on the smaller items.

Senator Kilzer: You don't know what that amount would get.

Lonnie Wangen: No, I would have to contact ITD.

Senator Kilzer: Would the subcommittee members be open to allow \$10,000.

Senator Robinson: Are we going to meet another time. I am wondering what \$10,000 would do.

Senator Kilzer: We do have to trust the judgment of Lonnie at that point. I would be in favor of putting in \$10,000. Did you have anything else on the first 10 items? # 11, about vans-support 1 at \$15,000 in anticipation of the other one being free.

Lonnie Wangen: We had \$30,000 last session and our van mileage is pretty good now so we anticipate that we won't need a bill the first year, possible the second year. We reduced it to \$15,000 from \$30,000 just in case we need to replace one van, and we are hoping we will not.

Lori Laschkewitsch: Office of Management and Budget. There is \$15,0000 included in the executive recommendation for the vans. The budget as it stands has it in there.

Senator Kilzer: # 12 - marketing, that was an item for marketing for \$20,000 I would not be in favor of that. I would hope the CVSO are doing that already.

V.Chairman Bowman: My feeling is when you get out of the service you know that there are programs for you and you can contact anybody to find out where to go get their information.

Senator Robinson: How much of this available on the website. We have our service officers; I assume a lot of this is on the website.

Senator Kilzer: We will leave that out for present. The last one is TBI, how was the figure of \$108,352 arrived at.

Lonnie Wangen: That was a spread sheet that I presented to the Governor's office and it was broke down to the number of individuals. 3 or 6 service members through that program,

Senator Kilzer: Did you have 3 or 6 individuals that quality.

Lonnie Wangen: No we haven't reached out to anyone yet.

Senator Kilzer: Have you checked out other services that offer treatment for the TBI patients.

Lonnie Wangen: This was as study to complement those treatments.

Senator Kilzer: Would the \$108,000 be used for patient care is that being paid for by a 3rd party payer.

Lonnie Wangen: No, it would be just for the 4 new military clients, they would be new to this program.

Senator Kilzer: Would they be coming off some other program.

Lonnie Wangen: No, see if this treatment improved their quality of life. These would be veterans with TBI that are receiving treatment through the VA. This organization wanted to see if this could be an improvement for their quality of life?

Senator Kilzer: Is there a place.

Lonnie Wangen: They would receive this in Fargo, near the VA hospital.

Lonnie Wangen: It is a treatment-study together to improve the lives of the veterans to get them into society quicker.

Senator Kilzer: Are they doing some of that now.

Lonnie Wangen: Yes, but not on a long term basis.

Senator Kilzer: How is the funding now?

Lonnie Wangen: Donations and payments from individuals taking treatments. No third party payer.

Senator Kilzer: I wish I knew more about it, frankly. In your next paragraph, I hate to leave the subject without all the information.

V.Chairman Bowman: Has any other state done anything like this for the TBI people and how do they do it?

Lonnie Wangen: I am not aware of treatments like this being done in other states.

Senator Kilzer: Your testimony makes it sounds like Heart Springs came to you and proposed this half day, transitional program. Is that the way it went? So the veteran would spend half a day each day of the week, is that the outpatient approach?

Lonnie Wangen: No this would not be a resident facility it would be outpatient. The methods similar to Mayo and Duke University, I can email that to you.

Senator Kilzer: We do have other programs across the state, we have HIT over in Mandan, and Soaring Eagles has an outpatient program. Do you know what would be different about your program?

Lonnie Wangen: No I am not familiar with the other programs so I couldn't do the comparison.

Senator Kilzer: I have dealt with these other places, and I feel they are getting good care and doing good work. You can go to more expensive places too. I would like to hear more what Heart Springs does that the other programs don't.

Lonnie Wangen: I will send you this information.

Senator Kilzer: For the present time I would leave it off. We can bring it up in conference. We have to move this out of the Senate. I would recommend we do not put this in and consider it in conference committee. Sean, can we draft the amendments. Any additional items?

Senator Robinson: Let's get the amendments either early Thursday or tomorrow. I'll show it and take it from there. The hearing was closed.

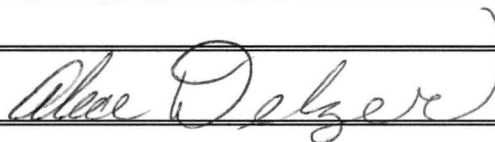
2015 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee
Harvest Room, State Capitol

HB 1025
4/9/2015
Job # 25953

- Subcommittee
 Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature



Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A BILL for an Act to defray the department of veterans' affairs. Do Pass as Amended)

Minutes:

Amendment # 15.8133.02001

Chairman Holmberg called the committee to order on Thursday, April 09, 2015 at 8:30 am in regards to HB 1025. Roll Call was taken. All committee members were present. Adam Mathiak, Legislative Council and Lori Laschkewitsch, OMB were also present.

Senator Kilzer presented amendment # 15.8133.02001. He explained the amendments and moved the amendments. The FTE's will be going from 8 to 9 and the 9th one is a transfer from Higher Ed and now that person will be with Dept of Veterans Affairs. He continued to explain the amendments. The stand down, an increase; these are 7 events in the biennium where veterans get together and talk about their problems. The house cut this down, and said they had to get a match with the federal government, but then they could only have the homeless come to the stand downs, and the veterans felt that the stand downs are for all veterans, so we put it back up at \$20,000. The website, for \$60,000, it was duplication of free services and so we felt that \$10,000 would serve that. In the area of Service Dogs, they provided one Veteran with a service dog, and it is a very successful program, the House had cut some of that funding, and there is a couple of dogs in training now and so we added \$50,000 for that. **I move the amendments. 2nd by V.Chairman Bowman.**

Chairman Holmberg: All in favor of the amendments say aye. It carried.

V.Chairman Bowman moved a Do Pass as Amended. 2nd by Senator Robinson.

Chairman Holmberg: Call the roll on a do pass as amended on HB 1025.

A Roll Call vote was taken. Yea: 13; Nay: 0; Absent: 0. Senator Robinson will carry the bill. The hearing was closed on HB 1025.

2018

Less estimated income	<u>3,565</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3,565</u>
General fund	(\$10,338)	\$55,100	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$50,000	\$109,762
FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

¹ Funding for employee health insurance premiums is adjusted to reflect the revised premium estimate of \$1,130.22 per month.

² Funding is provided for targeted equity salary funding.

³ Funding is increased by \$5,000 for stand down events to provide a total of \$20,000.

⁴ One-time funding is provided to complete an upgrade to the agency website.

⁵ One-time funding is added for service dog training to provide service dogs to veterans with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Date: 4-9-15
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2015 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1025

Senate Appropriations Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: 15.8133.02001

Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
 Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
 As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
 Place on Consent Calendar
Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By Kilzer Seconded By Bowman

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Chairman Holmberg			Senator Heckaman		
Senator Bowman			Senator Mathern		
Senator Krebsbach			Senator O'Connell		
Senator Carlisle			Senator Robinson		
Senator Sorvaag					
Senator G. Lee					
Senator Kilzer					
Senator Erbele					
Senator Wanzek					

Total (Yes) _____ No _____

Absent _____

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

*voice vote
Carried*

Date: 4-9-15
Roll Call Vote #: 2

2015 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1025

Senate Appropriations Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: _____

Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
 Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
 As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
 Place on Consent Calendar

Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By Bowman Seconded By Robinson

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Chairman Holmberg	✓		Senator Heckaman	✓	
Senator Bowman	✓		Senator Mathern	✓	
Senator Krebsbach	✓		Senator O'Connell	✓	
Senator Carlisle	✓		Senator Robinson	✓	
Senator Sorvaag	✓				
Senator G. Lee	✓				
Senator Kilzer	✓				
Senator Erbele	✓				
Senator Wanzek	✓				

Total (Yes) 13 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Robinson

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1025, as engrossed: Appropriations Committee (Sen. Holmberg, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS** and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed HB 1025 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 1, replace line 12 with:

"Veterans' affairs	\$1,410,580	\$455,398	\$1,865,978"
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Page 1, replace lines 15 through 17 with:

"Total all funds	\$1,420,703	\$460,275	\$1,880,978
Less estimated income	0	<u>288,018</u>	<u>288,018</u>
Total general fund	\$1,420,703	\$172,257	\$1,592,960"

Page 1, replace line 23 with:

"Website	\$15,000	\$10,000"
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Page 2, replace line 2 with:

"Service dogs	50,000	50,000"
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Page 2, replace line 4 with:

"Total general fund	\$395,000	\$60,000"
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Page 2, remove lines 9 through 13

Re-number accordingly

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT:

House Bill No. 1025 - Department of Veterans' Affairs - Senate Action

	Base Budget	House Version	Senate Changes	Senate Version
Veterans' Affairs	\$1,410,580	\$1,752,651	\$113,327	\$1,865,978
Accrued leave payments	10,123			
Transport Vans		15,000		15,000
Total all funds	\$1,420,703	\$1,767,651	\$113,327	\$1,880,978
Less estimated income	0	284,453	3,565	288,018
General fund	\$1,420,703	\$1,483,198	\$109,762	\$1,592,960
FTE	8.00	9.00	0.00	9.00

Department No. 321 - Department of Veterans' Affairs - Detail of Senate Changes

	Adjusts Funding for Health Insurance Premium Increases ¹	Adds Funding for Targeted Market Equity ²	Increases Funding for Stand Down Events ³	Adds One-Time Funding for Website Upgrade ⁴	Adds One-Time Funding for Service Dogs ⁵	Total Senate Changes
Veterans' Affairs	(\$6,773)	\$55,100	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$50,000	\$113,327
Accrued leave payments						
Transport Vans						
Total all funds	(\$6,773)	\$55,100	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$50,000	\$113,327
Less estimated income	3,565	0	0	0	0	3,565
General fund	(\$10,338) 0.00	\$55,100 0.00	\$5,000 0.00	\$10,000 0.00	\$50,000 0.00	\$109,762 0.00

FTE

¹ Funding for employee health insurance premiums is adjusted to reflect the revised premium estimate of \$1,130.22 per month.

² Funding is provided for targeted equity salary funding.

³ Funding is increased by \$5,000 for stand down events to provide a total of \$20,000.

⁴ One-time funding is provided to complete an upgrade to the agency website.

⁵ One-time funding is added for service dog training to provide service dogs to veterans with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

2015 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

HB 1025

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee - Human Resources Division
Sakakawea Room, State Capitol

HB 1025
4/15/2015
Job #26142

- Subcommittee
 Conference Committee

Kenneth M. Torbett

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the department of veterans' affairs.

Minutes:

Chairman Kreidt called the committee to order.

Sen. Robinson reviewed the Senate amendments. We did adjust the health insurance premiums to reflect the revised premium estimate of \$1330.22 per month. We addressed the targeted equity salary funding. We increased the stand-down events by \$5000. We were convinced that if we didn't provide some additional support, we were going to lose those events. We thought the amount was very minimal for the value it provided for our veterans. There is dollars for one-time website upgrade of \$10,000. We add one-time funding for service dogs at \$50,000. We understand there are 7 or 8 veterans that are waiting for these dogs. This funding will provide funding for, I believe, 4 at \$12,500. We thought that was something that we should do. I believe we had a transfer of an FTE from the university system, which brought their FTE total up from 8 to 9. Those are the changes that we put in place on the Senate side. We felt pretty good about the budget. Again, it's a small budget, small agency; but it's an agency that does important work. Those are the changes. I might have missed something.

Sen. Kilzer: I think there was one item that the House put in requiring federal money before they could get the stand-down money, and the veterans didn't like that. We agreed, and so we removed that requirement about requiring federal funding first, or something like that.

Rep. Nelson: On the stand down events, the VA does fund stand downs to some degree as well as the state. Does the federal government require the homeless vets in their rules, and the state doesn't have that? I think that was the reasoning for the amendment that you removed from the House. We thought we should exhaust the federal stand down components first, especially in the larger areas, so there would leave some of the state money for areas outside the four regional centers.

Sen. Robinson: The problem has got to be the reliability of the funding source. It got to the point where they were almost to the point of discontinuing the stand down events because they constantly had to raise money to pay for the costs of the event. They made the case that they need a minimum of \$20,000 to pull this off. We felt, given the instability of funding sources, and the fact they have to go out and raise money, and call on veterans' organizations, and many of those organizations are not as strong in terms of man and woman power as they were a few years ago, that this was an uphill battle for them. We thought we should just fund it so it's in place and there's some reliability involved.

Rep. Nelson: Is that one more stand down event for \$5,000? Wasn't it one? \$5000 for each event?

Sen. Robinson: I think you're right.

Rep. Nelson: If I remember right, some of communities are providing the stand down events without any assistance, are they not? If I remember right, the Bismarck area is where most of the stand down money was going.

Sen. Robinson: I don't recall. I think Bismarck is a location where they have these events. The case was made on the Senate side that financing them was a major problem; that they were at the end-of-the-rope type thing to keep these things going. Calling on the same old people all the time. And some of those people are no longer with us. Their ability to sustain the event was in question. We felt the value of those events was such that, let's just fund it and be done with it, and move forward.

Rep. Nelson: The market equity piece. Was that to be spread across the entire staff? In most of the budgets in the House, we pulled all the equity money out and our understanding was that in some agencies there would be a pool that may be established to plug some of that back in, but we wouldn't fund the individual agencies. Obviously, you're not working under that same standard in the Senate?

Sen. Kilzer: Initially when leadership came down and told us about the 3 and 3 and no market or target equity, that's what we did for a while until leadership softened, and said that targeted equity would be back in. That's when we changed and started putting target equity back in the budgets. The budgets run the whole gamut as to when they were acted upon by the House or by the Senate. So that's the way I look at it. We see some that have target equity not been put back in, and some that are. This is one that we saw in the Senate and put target equity back in.

Chairman Kreidt: I guess we didn't get that memo. We didn't get a call, either. On the service dogs, you put back \$50,000. The understanding that we had was that from the last biennium there was still \$37,500 left in that fund. We thought that, you know, it takes time to get these dogs trained. We dropped that off because we figured that they should use up the \$37,500 and that would probably get them through the biennium because we figured they could probably get about three dogs in place, and then take a look at it during the next session. That was our logic behind that.

Sen. Kilzer: Our logic might be a little different. There was \$50,000 in the present biennium. They're only going to have one veteran and dog completed at \$12,500 per dog or per pair. So that does leave \$37,500 carryover into the next biennium, but there are eight on the waiting list. That's why we put it back in. With \$37,500 remaining for the three dogs for the present biennium, and four more for the next biennium. That was our thinking.

Sen. Robinson: That's correct. There were 7 veterans waiting for dogs and this money would accommodate most if not all of those people. On the targeted equity, with the March forecast we were at 3 and 3. And then after reviewing the status of salaries statewide, the Governor had market equity and target equity. We felt that in this competitive environment, with so many agencies losing employees, that we had to focus on at least restoring the target equity, so I think we on the Senate side, across the board in all of our budgets, restored the target equity, and there is one budget where we went a bit above that, and that's the area of corrections, because of the tremendous turnover in correctional staff. 70-some out of 150 in the last six months.

Chairman Kreidt: On the website upgrade, was there some work already done on that?

Sen. Kilzer: In the proposal we had, the request was for \$60,000 to update it. A large part of that would go to two map projects. After further talking, we can get along by using maps from other sources. It would take about \$10,000 to bring the site up to date and make it coordinated with the national website. That's why we funded it at \$10,000; to finish it out and make it compatible and very easily accessible.

Chairman Kreidt: Will this \$10,000 complete that project?

Sen. Kilzer: It is up and running now and usable, but it can be improved to the ideal with the \$10,000. It won't have these two fancy map components, but they are on the national website.

Sen. Robinson: Getting back to the dogs: we were reluctant to be in a situation where we had several veterans waiting two full years to get dogs. We thought it was important; the dogs are extremely valuable to these folks who have special needs. We thought, for the investment, pretty small money, to enhance someone's quality of life, who has served and come back with post-traumatic stress or whatever, we thought it was the right thing to do for a pretty small amount of money, \$12,500 per dog, given the impact these four dogs would have.

Rep. Nelson: I apologize. This might have been touched on. Is this in addition to the \$37,500 carryover? So we're looking at \$87,500 in this line item for service dogs now?

Sen. Robinson: It's our understanding that there are some veterans and dogs ready to transition on board, and that would take that \$37,500 for three more dogs. We felt, there are four or five more veterans waiting, that we should fund them at the beginning of the biennium so we don't have to wait another 24 months.

Sen. Kilzer: It's \$12,500 per pair, dog and veteran.

Chairman Kreidt: So you're assuring us that when we come back next time there won't be \$37,500 standing out there like we have now?

Sen. Robinson: The plan would be to get that money out, and barring some big surprise, that someone isn't with us on July 1, it's my understanding that those folks are waiting and there will be more coming online. It took a while to get this program up and running. The chances are pretty high that they're all going to be in place, and those dollars will be expended.

Sen. Kilzer: There were other items that we said no to on the Senate side. These weren't the only requests we received. These are the ones that came to the top, and we put them in the bill, and ask for you to look at it.

Rep. Nelson: From my standpoint, I agree with the health insurance premium.

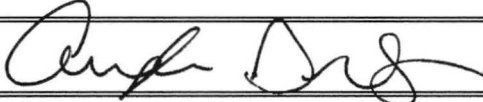
Chairman Kreidt dismissed the committee.

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee - Human Resources Division
Sakakawea Room, State Capitol

HB 1025
4/16/2015
Job 26188

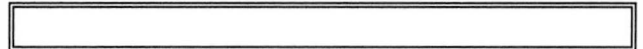
Subcommittee
 Conference Committee



Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the department of veterans' affairs.

Minutes:



Chairman Kreidt called the committee to order.

Chairman Kreidt: Leadership has been meeting regarding the equity. There is some in this budget and the House position is until we get direction from leadership we can't move forward with this budget.

Sen. Kilzer: On targeted equity, as I understand it, the total amount of targeted equity in the various budgets is around \$13 million. This budget has about 55. Leadership is considering it. The \$13,000 request may be dealt with in various ways.

Chairman Kreidt: I did visit with leadership and they said things were progressing well.

Sen. Bowman: Have we got anything concrete that we agree on?

Sen. Robinson: Where are we on the vans, the seeing eye dogs, the stand-downs? Are we in agreement on the other issues?

Chairman Kreidt: At this point, we agree with the health insurance premium increases. The one-time funding for the website upgrade, I'm concerned about. This website is fairly new. I would like for them to start to use it. It seems like a good website. At this point, putting another \$10,000 into this, I can't agree with that. The stand-downs for \$5,000, they have been using the money. On that one I'm not sure how the other conferees feel.

Rep. Nelson: We put in the carry-over money that was provided in last session for service dogs. We're not convinced that they're going to need that additional \$50,000. I would propose that we give you the stand-down increase of \$5,000 and then drop the last two items from the list. I think the House feels the website upgrade is not needed at this time.

Until we have a better handle on how these service dogs are going to be put into service, that the \$37,500 is adequate for this biennium.

Sen. Robinson: I think the Senate would be very concerned about the service dogs. The dollars that are left this biennium are going to be gone in the next couple of weeks. There are seven veterans that are waiting. I think it would be unfortunate if we did not invest \$50,000 and not have four wait for two more years. I think it's a small amount of money for a program that's worthwhile. These folks are hurting. In fact, I think there would be support on the Senate floor to add even more money. This is a nominal amount. We have waiting veterans for the \$50,000 that we're looking at for the next biennium. I would hope that we could discuss that further and not take that off the list.

Rep. Nelson: How about the other item? Can we agree on the stand-down event for the website upgrade?

Sen. Robinson: Are we in agreement to support the stand-downs at \$20,000, the additional \$5,000 that we put in?

Rep. Nelson: I would propose that we would increase the stand-downs \$5,000 in exchange for the website upgrade, there would be nothing there.

Sen. Robinson: Maybe that's something the three of us could talk about in the interim before we meet again. We appreciate if we're willing to do the dogs and the stand-downs, we can talk about that website. We did reduce it significantly, but if it is a contentious item, I know this is a give and take situation.

Sen. Bowman: We'll think about what we discussed here because it is a proposal and it does have some merit. Hopefully there is a number that we can agree on.

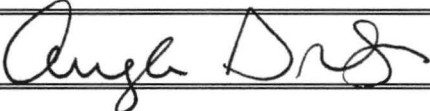
Chairman Kreidt dismissed the committee.

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee - Human Resources Division
Sakakawea Room, State Capitol

HB 1025
4/17/2015
Job 26227

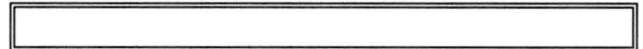
Subcommittee
 Conference Committee



Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the department of veterans' affairs.

Minutes:



Chairman Kreidt called the committee to order.

Rep. Nelson: I'm going to make a suggestion. We've agreed already on the health insurance premiums in good faith. The targeted equity is \$55,000. Given what's happened for state workers, they are entitled to the 3 and 3, the increase in health insurance, and the retirement benefits. If you compare that to schools and medical providers that are sitting with a 2 and 2 inflator right now, I not embarrassed to say in this case that we could let this go. I'm going to recommend that we eliminate the targeted equity in this budget. We have agreed to the increase for the additional stand-down for \$5,000. I'm also suggesting that we eliminate the website upgrade. It's been demonstrated that their website is in good shape now. The last item is the service dogs. You've asked for an additional four service dogs for the next biennium in addition to the three that are carry-over. I would suggest that we fund two of those four dogs for \$25,000.

Sen. Kilzer: I would not vote for that package. I think there's things in there that are deserved and should be left in, starting with the targeted equity. Overall the budgets contained \$13 million in that item. There is talk of going to a pool and if that becomes a reality, I don't think these folks should be excluded. I think with the dogs there's been a pretty good demonstration that it's needed. So I wouldn't accept that.

Sen. Robinson: I would agree with Sen. Kilzer. We're not talking much money. I thought our package was pretty reasonable.

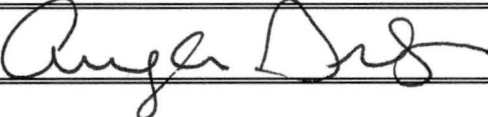
Chairman Kreidt dismissed the committee.

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee - Human Resources Division
Sakakawea Room, State Capitol

HB 1025
4/18/2015
Job 26247

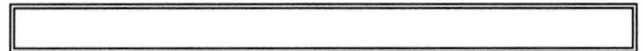
- Subcommittee
 Conference Committee



Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the department of veterans' affairs.

Minutes:



Chairman Kreidt called the committee to order.

Chairman Kreidt: We pretty much agreed on all of the amendments from the Senate. We're working on the dog situation. At this time, we had \$37,500 carry-over that will be used to train three dogs but the Senate wanted to add another four dogs for \$50,000. At this time we can't come to an agreement on that. The other thing was the \$55,000 for targeted and market equity. That's been removed and going into a pool. It will be accessed through that pool.

Sen. Robinson: So we're at a standstill until Monday on the dog issue?

Chairman Kreidt: We'll take up the dogs on Monday.

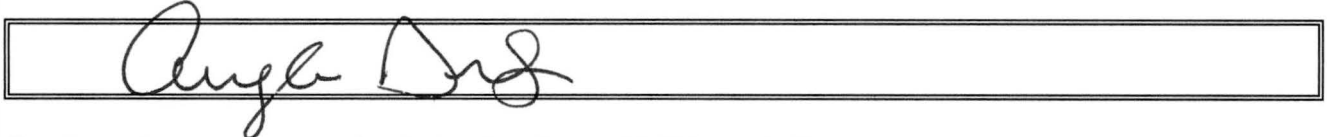
Chairman Kreidt adjourned the committee.

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee - Human Resources Division
Sakakawea Room, State Capitol

HB 1025
4/20/2015
Job 26258

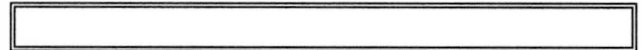
Subcommittee
 Conference Committee



Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the department of veterans' affairs.

Minutes:



Chairman Kreidt called the committee to order.

Chairman Kreidt: We've agreed on most of the issues. The sticking point is the service dogs. We did make a counter offer when we met on Saturday. I sat down this morning with leadership and they're reviewing the budget and we're quite a ways upside down yet so the direction I got at this point is that in regards to the service dogs, the direction of the House would be to offer one additional dog, the \$12,500 so with the \$37,500 carry-over and those three dogs going out, it would bring the total to \$50,000.

Sen. Kilzer: It was my impression that there are requests for several more and we're talking about a whole biennium. What is your leadership provision about future requests that might come in before the next session?

Chairman Kreidt: We really didn't get into that. The understanding I had is these dogs have to be paid for up-front. Is that correct?

Sen. Kilzer: My impression was that they aren't paid for until they're put into service.

Chairman Kreidt: The question I had with the \$37,500 is if we have three dogs ready, why did we have that amount of money still carried forward. That's why we were figuring to just add the \$12,500 for a total of \$50,000 with the carry-over. We went through a biennium where we only got one dog out. Are we going to come back next time and still have carry-over? That's the concern that I have. At this point, that's the offer we have.

Sen. Kilzer: I can see that not having the funds available for appropriation could probably make the whole program come to an end or at least put on pause for a year or two. I don't

think asking for two dogs per year is too much in the veteran population. The need is unquestionably there.

Chairman Kreidt: Are you going to stand on the \$50,000 for four additional dogs? Is that going to be your final offer or are you willing to negotiate a lower number?

Sen. Kilzer: We're always open to negotiation. I don't want to close out the program, which is what your offer would do.

Chairman Kreidt: We would come forward with an additional dog.

Rep. Nelson: I feel a little taken away. My proposal last week was two additional dogs. If there was any reason for me to believe that the Senate would agree with that, I would go back and try to rekindle that proposal. Sen. Kilzer makes a good point. If there are recipients of dogs and the dogs are available through the graduation process that would be five dogs. The Veterans' Affairs could go to the emergency commission for the funding for the remaining dogs. Is that something we could move towards? That way the program would continue. If they demonstrate that there is a recipient and a dog that's available in the next biennium that they'd have that additional process. I think it would insure that there is a process that could be completed.

Sen. Kilzer: That does sound more encouraging; that the light is not turned off and that we can move along that pathway. There is time from the time that a request comes in until the dog is trained. That gives an opportunity for Veterans' Affairs people to come before the emergency commission and ask for that anticipated check.

Sen. Robinson: Do you have to go back? Can we not make that deal today?

Rep. Nelson: We did offer the two dogs and unfortunately you rejected that. We shouldn't have to keep coming back for this.

Chairman Kreidt: I would agree to that. Before we wrap this up, I would like to quickly go through what we've talked about so far. We adjusted the healthcare, the market equity has been pulled out, we agreed to the additional \$5,000. The funding for the website we want to see if that's going to work before we put any additional money into that. We'll see if we can get another dog put in. If they have two more dogs that are going to be put in place that they would be allowed to go to the emergency commission for the funding for that.

Sen. Kilzer: On this part about going to the emergency commission, I would like to see language in there that requests be considered for up to two dogs per year because I don't know what the need and the demand and the requests will be. I don't want to put just one or two dogs as a maximum. I want a consideration. They don't have to grant the request, but I do want them to be able to put in the request at least for that.

Rep. Nelson: Just so I understand, you would like to see language that up to two dogs in addition per year could be funded through emergency commission action?

Sen. Kilzer: Yes. We'll know what the waiting list is, if we request that.

Rep. Nelson: To clarify, what we will bring to leadership is the \$37,500, those three dogs are not in question. They're carried forward. So we're talking about two additional dogs in funding, so it would be five dogs in total and then that language of two per year with the emergency commission approval.

Sen. Bowman: Do we need that motion so they can draft the amendments the way we just talked? Or are they going to draft the amendments and we're going to look at them one more time?

Chairman Kreidt: If this comes through, do you want to bring a proposed motion forward at this time? And if they're in agreement we can get the amendments then?

Rep. Nelson: That would speed the process up. I'll move that.

Sen. Bowman: Second.

A Roll Call Vote was taken. Yes: 6, No: 0, Absent: 0. Motion carries.

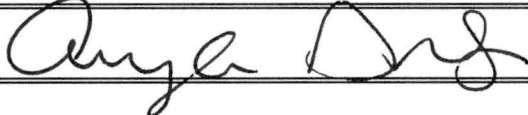
Chairman Kreidt dismissed the committee.

2015 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee - Human Resources Division
Sakakawea Room, State Capitol

HB 1025
4/22/2015
Job 26355

Subcommittee
 Conference Committee



Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the department of veterans' affairs.

Minutes:



Chairman Kreidt called the committee to order.

Chairman Kreidt: We did bring an amendment forward. We do have a difference that we can correct rather quickly. The Senate is not in agreement with section 4, number 1. Otherwise we agree on the rest of the amendment. I'm willing to scratch off number 1. Then there would part of that on page 2 under the amendments also, the second part of that. When we drafted the amendment, we thought this would be the right thing to do to try to get some outside money into the purchasing of the dogs, along with a match from the state. The discussion is that there is some of this going on now or trying to do this so the Senate feels that doing this would not be necessary and probably puts some extra work onto the Veterans' Affairs office staff.

Sen. Kilzer: This is the first I heard of any match. The minutes of our meetings do not reflect the footnotes in here. I agree with you in removing that part of it.

Chairman Kreidt: I think everybody comes to that consensus. So again, under section 4, number 1 we would take out and then wording that would reflect that on page 2. Otherwise everything else is what we agreed to. We can go ahead and finish this budget.

Sen. Robinson: I would move to approve the amendment with the change removing reference to matching.

Rep. Nelson: Second.

A Roll Call Vote was taken. Yes: 6, No: 0, Absent: 0. Motion carries.

Chairman Kreidt adjourned the committee.

2/2/15
 2/13/15
 1/2

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1025

That the Senate recede from its amendments as printed on pages 1531 and 1532 of the House Journal and pages 1324 and 1325 of the Senate Journal and that Engrossed House Bill No. 1025 be amended as follows:

Page 1, replace line 12 with:

"Veterans' affairs	\$1,410,580	\$365,298	\$1,775,878
Contingent service dogs	0	25,000	25,000"

Page 1, replace lines 15 through 17 with:

"Total all funds	\$1,420,703	\$395,175	\$1,815,878
Less estimated income	0	<u>288,018</u>	<u>288,018</u>
Total general fund	\$1,420,703	\$107,157	\$1,527,860"

Page 2, replace lines 1 and 2 with:

"Service dogs		0	25,000
Contingent service dogs		0	25,000"

Page 2, replace line 4 with:

"Total general fund		\$295,000	\$50,000"
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Page 2, replace lines 9 through 13 with:

"SECTION 4. CONTINGENT FUNDING - SERVICE DOGS. Funding provided in the contingent service dogs line item in section 1 of this Act includes \$25,000 from the general fund for service dogs to assist North Dakota veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder. The department of veterans' affairs may spend these funds subject to:

1. The dogs having completed service dog training;
2. Eligible veterans having been approved to receive the service dogs; and
3. Budget section approval."

Renumber accordingly

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT:

House Bill No. 1025 - Department of Veterans' Affairs - Conference Committee Action

	Base Budget	House Version	Conference Committee Changes	Conference Committee Version	Senate Version	Comparison to Senate
Veterans' Affairs	\$1,410,580	\$1,752,651	\$23,227	\$1,775,878	\$1,865,978	(\$90,100)
Accrued leave payments	10,123					
Transport Vans		15,000		15,000	15,000	
Contingent service dogs			25,000	25,000		25,000
Total all funds	\$1,420,703	\$1,767,651	\$48,227	\$1,815,878	\$1,880,978	(\$65,100)
Less estimated income	0	284,453	3,565	288,018	288,018	0
	\$1,420,703	\$1,483,198	\$44,662	\$1,527,860	\$1,592,960	(\$65,100)

General fund						
FTE	8.00	9.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	0.00

Department No. 321 - Department of Veterans' Affairs - Detail of Conference Committee Changes

	Adjusts Funding for Health Insurance Premium Increases ¹	Increases Funding for Stand Down Events ²	Adds One-Time Funding for Service Dogs ³	Adds Contingent One-Time Funding for Service Dogs ⁴	Total Conference Committee Changes
Veterans' Affairs	(\$6,773)	\$5,000	\$25,000		\$23,227
Accrued leave payments					
Transport Vans					
Contingent service dogs				25,000	25,000
Total all funds	(\$6,773)	\$5,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$48,227
Less estimated income	3,565	0	0	0	3,565
General fund	(\$10,338)	\$5,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$44,662
FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

¹ Funding for employee health insurance premiums is adjusted to reflect the revised premium estimate of \$1,130.22 per month.

² Funding is increased by \$5,000 for stand down events to provide a total of \$20,000 from the general fund, the same as the Senate version.

³ One-time funding of \$25,000 is added for service dog training to provide two service dogs to veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The Senate included \$50,000 for four service dogs.

⁴ Contingent one-time funding is added for two service dogs for veterans with PTSD. The funding is contingent on service dogs that have completed training, eligible and approved veterans, and Budget Section approval. The Senate version included \$50,000 for service dogs, but did not include the contingency.

This amendment also:

- Removes the section related to contingent funding for stand down events added by the House, the same as the Senate version.
- Adds a section relating to contingent funding for two service dogs for veterans with PTSD that is subject to service dogs that have completed training, eligible and approved veterans, and Budget Section approval. Neither the House nor Senate version included this section.

**2015 HOUSE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE
 ROLL CALL VOTES**

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1025 as (re) engrossed

House Appropriations - Human Resources Committee

- Action Taken**
- HOUSE accede to Senate Amendments
 - HOUSE accede to Senate Amendments and further amend
 - SENATE recede from Senate amendments
 - SENATE recede from Senate amendments and amend as follows
 - Unable to agree, recommends that the committee be discharged and a new committee be appointed

Motion Made by: _____ Seconded by: _____

Representatives	4/15	4/16	4/17	Yes	No	Senators	4/15	4/16	4/17	Yes	No
Chairman Kreidt	X	X	X			Sen. Kilzer	X	X	X		
Rep. Nelson	X	X	X			Sen. Bowman	X	X	X		
Rep. Holman	X	X	X			Sen. Robinson	X	X	X		
Total Rep. Vote						Total Senate Vote					

Vote Count Yes: _____ No: _____ Absent: _____

House Carrier _____ Senate Carrier _____

LC Number _____ of amendment

LC Number _____ of engrossment

Emergency clause added or deleted

Statement of purpose of amendment

**2015 HOUSE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES**

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1025 as (re) engrossed

House Appropriations - Human Resources Committee

- Action Taken**
- HOUSE accede to Senate Amendments
 - HOUSE accede to Senate Amendments and further amend
 - SENATE recede from Senate amendments
 - SENATE recede from Senate amendments and amend as follows
 - Unable to agree, recommends that the committee be discharged and a new committee be appointed

Motion Made by: Sen. Robinson Seconded by: Rep. Nelson

Representatives		4/22		Yes	No	Senators		4/22		Yes	No
Chairman Kreidt		X		X		Sen. Kilzer		X		X	
Rep. Nelson		X		X		Sen. Bowman		X		X	
Rep. Holman		X		X		Sen. Robinson		X		X	
Total Rep. Vote				3		Total Senate Vote				3	

Vote Count Yes: 6 No: 0 Absent: 0

House Carrier _____ Senate Carrier _____

LC Number 15.8133 . .02003 of amendment

LC Number .04000 . _____ of engrossment

Emergency clause added or deleted

Statement of purpose of amendment

REPORT OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

HB 1025, as engrossed: Your conference committee (Sens. Kilzer, Bowman, Robinson and Reps. Kreidt, J. Nelson, Holman) recommends that the **SENATE RECEDE** from the Senate amendments as printed on HJ pages 1531-1532, adopt amendments as follows, and place HB 1025 on the Seventh order:

That the Senate recede from its amendments as printed on pages 1531 and 1532 of the House Journal and pages 1324 and 1325 of the Senate Journal and that Engrossed House Bill No. 1025 be amended as follows:

Page 1, replace line 12 with:

"Veterans' affairs	\$1,410,580	\$365,298	\$1,775,878
Contingent service dogs	0	25,000	25,000"

Page 1, replace lines 15 through 17 with:

"Total all funds	\$1,420,703	\$395,175	\$1,815,878
Less estimated income	0	<u>288,018</u>	<u>288,018</u>
Total general fund	\$1,420,703	\$107,157	\$1,527,860"

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Page 2, replace line 4 with:

"Total general fund	\$295,000	\$50,000"
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Page 2, replace lines 9 through 13 with:

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1. The dogs having completed service dog training;
2. Eligible veterans having been approved to receive the service dogs; and
3. Budget section approval."

Re-number accordingly

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT:

House Bill No. 1025 - Department of Veterans' Affairs - Conference Committee Action

	Base Budget	House Version	Conference Committee Changes	Conference Committee Version	Senate Version	Comparison to Senate
Veterans' Affairs	\$1,410,580	\$1,752,651	\$23,227	\$1,775,878	\$1,865,978	(\$90,100)
Accrued leave payments	10,123					
Transport Vans		15,000		15,000	15,000	
Contingent service dogs			25,000	25,000		25,000
Total all funds	\$1,420,703	\$1,767,651	\$48,227	\$1,815,878	\$1,880,978	(\$65,100)
Less estimated income	0	284,453	3,565	288,018	288,018	0
General fund	\$1,420,703	\$1,483,198	\$44,662	\$1,527,860	\$1,592,960	(\$65,100)
FTE	8.00	9.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	0.00

Department No. 321 - Department of Veterans' Affairs - Detail of Conference Committee Changes

	Adjusts Funding for Health Insurance Premium Increases ¹	Increases Funding for Stand Down Events ²	Adds One-Time Funding for Service Dogs ³	Adds Contingent One-Time Funding for Service Dogs ⁴	Total Conference Committee Changes
Veterans' Affairs	(\$6,773)	\$5,000	\$25,000		\$23,227
Accrued leave payments					
Transport Vans					
Contingent service dogs				25,000	25,000
Total all funds	(\$6,773)	\$5,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$48,227
Less estimated income	3,565	0	0	0	3,565
General fund	(\$10,338)	\$5,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$44,662
FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

¹ Funding for employee health insurance premiums is adjusted to reflect the revised premium estimate of \$1,130.22 per month.

² Funding is increased by \$5,000 for stand down events to provide a total of \$20,000 from the general fund, the same as the Senate version.

³ One-time funding of \$25,000 is added for service dog training to provide two service dogs to veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The Senate included \$50,000 for four service dogs.

⁴ Contingent one-time funding is added for two service dogs for veterans with PTSD. The funding is contingent on service dogs that have completed training, eligible and approved veterans, and Budget Section approval. The Senate version included \$50,000 for service dogs, but did not include the contingency.

This amendment also:

- Removes the section related to contingent funding for stand down events added by the House, the same as the Senate version.
- Adds a section relating to contingent funding for two service dogs for veterans with PTSD that is subject to service dogs that have completed training, eligible and approved veterans, and Budget Section approval. Neither the House nor Senate version included this section.

Engrossed HB 1025 was placed on the Seventh order of business on the calendar.

2015 TESTIMONY

HB 1025

Department 321 - Department of Veterans' Affairs
 House Bill No. 1025

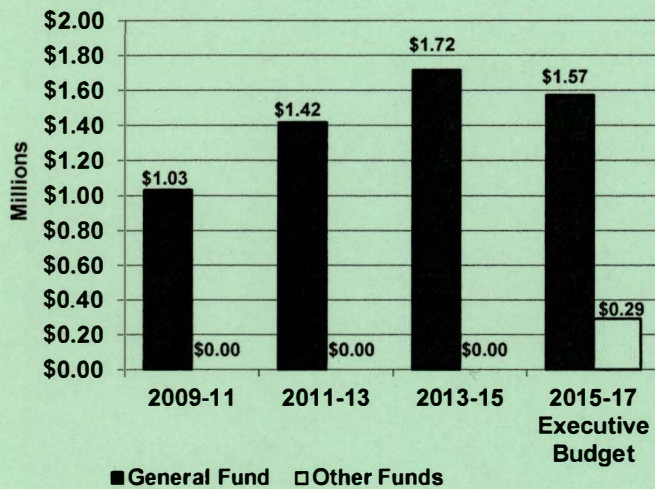
Executive Budget Comparison to Prior Biennium Appropriations

	FTE Positions	General Fund	Other Funds	Total
2015-17 Executive Budget	9.00	\$1,572,448	\$292,933	\$1,865,381
2013-15 Legislative Appropriations	8.00	1,715,703	0	1,715,703
Increase (Decrease)	1.00	(\$143,255)	\$292,933	\$149,678

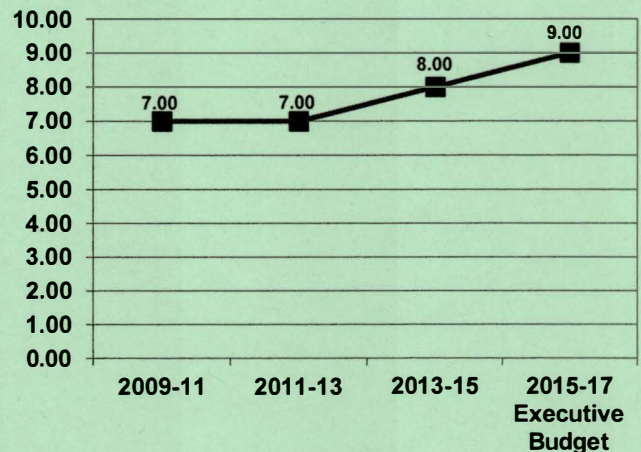
Ongoing and One-Time General Fund Appropriations

	Ongoing General Fund Appropriation	One-Time General Fund Appropriation	Total General Fund Appropriation
2015-17 Executive Budget	\$1,572,448	\$0	\$1,572,448
2013-15 Legislative Appropriations	1,420,703	295,000	1,715,703
Increase (Decrease)	\$151,745	(\$295,000)	(\$143,255)

Agency Funding



FTE Positions



Executive Budget Comparison to Base Level

	General Fund	Other Funds	Total
2015-17 Executive Budget	\$1,572,448	\$292,933	\$1,865,381
2015-17 Base Level	1,420,703	0	1,420,703
Increase (Decrease)	\$151,745	\$292,933	\$444,678

Attached as an appendix is a detailed comparison of the executive budget to the agency's base level appropriations.

Executive Budget Highlights

	General Fund	Other Funds	Total
1. Provides funding for state employee salary and benefit increases, of which \$63,370 relates to performance increases, \$15,111 is for market equity adjustments, \$38,858 is for health insurance increases, and \$6,519 is for retirement contribution increases	\$106,621	\$17,237	\$123,858
2. Provides targeted equity salary funding	\$55,100	\$0	\$55,100
3. Transfers the State Approving Agency federal funding and 1 FTE position from the North Dakota University System	\$0	\$275,696	\$275,696
4. Adjusts funding for operating expenses	(\$5,220)	\$0	(\$5,220)
5. Increases funding for stand down events, to provide a total of \$20,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000
6. Adds funding to purchase vans to transport veterans to medical appointments	\$15,000	\$0	\$15,000

7. Removes funding for Agent Orange grants approved during the 2013-15 biennium	(\$50,000)	\$0	(\$50,000)
8. Removes funding for service dog grants approved during the 2013-15 biennium	(\$50,000)	\$0	(\$50,000)

Continuing Appropriations

Veterans' aid fund - North Dakota Century Code Section 37-14-03.3 - The purpose of the veterans' aid fund is to make loans or advancements to any veteran and to a surviving spouse of a veteran if the spouse has not remarried.

Significant Audit Findings

There are no significant audit findings for this agency.

Major Related Legislation

House Bill No. 1053 - Centralized Desktop Support Services - Requires certain agencies to obtain centralized desktop support services from the Information Technology Department.

Department of Veterans' Affairs - Budget No. 321
House Bill No. 1025
Base Level Funding Changes

	Executive Budget Recommendation			Total
	FTE Positions	General Fund	Other Funds	
2015-17 Biennium Base Level	8.00	\$1,420,703	\$0	\$1,420,703
2015-17 Ongoing Funding Changes				
Base payroll changes		\$70,244		\$70,244
Salary increase - Performance		46,133	\$17,237	63,370
Salary increase - Market equity		15,111		15,111
Salary increase - Targeted equity		55,100		55,100
Retirement increase		6,519		6,519
Health insurance increase		38,858		38,858
Transfers FTE from the North Dakota University System	1.00		275,696	275,696
Adjusts funding for operating expenses		(5,220)		(5,220)
Increases funding for stand down events		10,000		10,000
Adds funding to purchase vans		15,000		15,000
Removes funding for Agent Orange grants		(50,000)		(50,000)
Removes funding for service dog grants		(50,000)		(50,000)
Total ongoing funding changes	1.00	\$151,745	\$292,933	\$444,678
One-time funding items				
Total one-time funding changes	0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Changes to Base Level Funding	1.00	\$151,745	\$292,933	\$444,678
2015-17 Total Funding	9.00	\$1,572,448	\$292,933	\$1,865,381

Testimony on HB 1025
House Appropriations Committee
Department of Veterans Affairs
January 15, 2013

Chairman's Pollert and Committee Members:

Our last financial audit by the State Auditor's Office was for a two-year period ending June 30, 2012. There were two findings that were noted from the audit. Bank Reconcilements (Finding 12-1) recommended that bank reconcilements be done monthly and be reviewed and approved by the Commissioner. Procedures have been put in place to ensure that the reconcilements and transfers are done on a monthly basis and the paperwork is initialed by the Commissioner. The Department is up-to-date on this recommendation. The second finding was an informal recommendation that the deposit slip be agreed to the remittance list by an independent person who initials and dates the deposit slip. Again, procedures have been put in place to ensure this recommendation has been met.

The Department's major budget components are salaries & benefits, which account for 78% of the funding, followed by rent and travel, 5.8% and 5.6% respectively. We have eight full-time positions and offices in Fargo and Bismarck. Our funding is through general fund dollars.

We have no major ongoing funding increases or decreases that were approved by the 2011 or 2013 Legislative Assemblies.

Reviewing our 2013-15 biennium spending to the line item appropriations:

Accrued Leave Payments: we have spent \$693 of the \$10,123 appropriated. This was for one employee resignation.

Technology Project Carryover: This represented funding not used from the 2011-2013 budget for our website project. The \$7,933 was spent within the first four months of this biennium.

Transport Vans: \$30,000 was appropriated to provide a transportation van replacement program. Vans are used to transport veterans from throughout the State to medical appointments at the Fargo VA facility. Under an agreement with the US Department of Veterans Affairs, who provide maintenance and insurance, the vans are replaced when they reach between 120,000 miles. One van has already been purchased at a cost of \$15,000 and another van has been ordered to arrive in the spring.

Grants – Agent Orange: The purpose of this funding is to identify and provide services to North Dakota veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange. Half of the funding (\$26,448) paid for billboards in the State providing a toll-free number for veterans to call with questions or to start claims with the US Department of Veterans Affairs. This billboard has caught national attention and similar billboards are now located in at least 7 states. The remaining funds (\$23,552) went to the ND Vietnam Veterans of America for resources materials used at town hall meetings they held throughout North Dakota. The VVA has worked in conjunction with the NDDVA, VA Vet Center, Outreach services, CVSO's and other stake holders to conduct "Round Table" or "Town Hall" events. Events are still being planned and conducted. So far 15 events have been held and over 400 veterans attended. Of these 89 veterans were identified as not receiving care/benefits they are due and 86 confirmed follow up appointments were conducted.

Veterans' Affairs Administration:

The Department's budget of \$1,375,580 includes:

- ▶ \$15,000 for website improvements that we are working on with ITD – we have spent \$5,500 to date and ITD plans to have this project finished by the end of the biennium;
- ▶ \$10,000 for Stand Down events – As of October 2014, there is \$100 remaining for the rest of the biennium;
- ▶ \$50,000 for service dogs to assist veterans with PTSD – veterans have been selected to receive dogs and funding will be used by the end of the biennium.
- ▶ The remaining funds are used for the administration of the Department.

General Fund Transfer: \$250,000 transferred to the Veterans Post War Trust Fund principal balance.

2015-2017 Requested Budget Changes:

Restore Base Budget Funding

To restore base budget funding to maintain operating levels for the 2015-2017 biennium. Costs increases in travel impact the agency's ability to participate and attend Outreach events throughout the State, as well as conduct CVSO training. Supplies - IT Software and IT Equipment under \$5,000 funds will continue our ability to stay current with technology changes and the agency's replacement schedule as recommended by ITD. Supplies - IT Software also includes vendor agreements covering our Claims and Loan Program software programs. These agreements cover support, maintenance, upgrades and off-site backups of these important programs. IT Contractual Services covers ongoing costs for transfers of DD214s from our VetraSpec software system (handles VA claims documents) to the State's Filenet system. This cost would be \$47,846.

(1) Increase to the Post War Trust Fund – One time

The funding available for service to benefits from the PWTF is not enough to fully fund all programs and properly care for our veteran's. In the interest of caring for our veterans of today and ensuring we can provide for the un-met needs of our veterans in the future we have determined that an additional \$2,000,000 in principal is needed. This principal amount will never be spent-only invested so the interest earnings can be distributed. During the 63rd legislative assembly HB 1468 requested \$2,000,000. \$250,000 was appropriated and added to the principal of the PWTF. Under the direction and advice of the 63rd legislative assembly leadership we are requesting the remaining \$1,750,000 to our budget.

(2) Veterans Organizations NSO Office

Currently the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (NDDVA) acts as the Power of Attorney (POA) for Veteran Service Organizations which cannot support a POA in the state of North Dakota. The North Dakota Chapters of the American Legion and the VFW have indicated that they are no longer financially situated to fund their POA positions at the Fargo VA Regional Office. The VFW has indicated that 60% of this year's entire states budget went to the POA's at the Fargo VA Regional Office, their memberships are down and they foresee, with the trend of the past years, the department will not be capable of funding these positions in the very near future.

The VFW and American Legion POA officers are funded only by their state organizations. The DAV also provides POA services at the Fargo VARO. They are funded by their National organizations, which have shown some concern over funding as well.

During the current biennium the National AMVETS eliminated their POA in North Dakota. The POA was taken over by the NDDVA which increased our workload. If the VFW, DAV and American Legion cannot fund these positions-this could fall on the NDDVA to provide services to these veterans.

To ensure that each organization can continue to fund their POA's at the Fargo VARO we are requesting a \$50,000 per year per organization grant from the NDDVA budget to supplement their operating expenses. This would be \$50,000 x 3 organizations or \$150,000 per year totalling \$300,000 per biennium.

(3) State Approving Agency

The 2015-17 budget includes federal funding in the amount of \$275,696 for the State Approving Authority (SAA) to move under the Department. The SAA is currently located within Higher Education. The funding includes one FTE position along with operating expenses. We are already working closely with Rhonda Schauer, Director, State Approving Agency, and anticipate a smooth transition. She has already relocated

to our Bismarck office and is proving to be an additional resource to the Department in providing services to veterans. This move is supported by the current VA Director, the past two and current Interim Chancellor, the ND SAA Director, and the ND DVA Commissioner. Approximately 24 States have their Department of Veterans Affairs oversee their State Approving Agencies.

(4) Salary Equity Funding.

We have had significant turnover in the past year and a half. Since the start of the biennium we have replaced two out of four Veterans Benefits Special positions and one has recently resigned, we also replaced our Financial Programs Manager. All were due to gaining higher compensation. We had four of our top candidates refuse employment due to the compensation package we could offer, this was for just one position we were trying to fill. We have an employee with over 30 years in our agency that is still not at the MPP. In looking at the last legislative session and the target goal to have state employees compensated at 95% of the MPP we would need an additional \$96,143. The Governor recognized the need of our small agency and put in \$55,100 to start to address this problem.

(5) Training Position

In an attempt to meet the demand for training we are proposing one new FTE to act as the training officer & benefits specialist. 70% of the training officer's time would be spent attending training, producing training programs, creating training kits and binders and conducting training with CVSO's. This would include complete initial training for new CVSO's as well as continued training on basic and advanced levels of knowledge for current CVSO's. 30% of the training officer's time would be spent doing hands on work helping veterans obtain benefits such as filing claims, as they will need to be proficient at what they are instructing and changes happen frequently. One of the biggest concerns our CVSO's seem to have revolves around training. We need more staff dedicated to training in order to properly accomplish this objective. Better trained and informed CVSO's will result in much better services to our veterans and their dependents. This will greatly improve the lives of many of our veteran's and their dependents.

An added note: the Federal VA expended over \$334,755,000.00 in 2013 and over \$279,238,000.00 in 2012. That is over half a Billion Dollars in Federal funds coming into North Dakota during the last Biennium. Without VSO's this does not happen. Also this is an increase of over \$55,000,000.00 in just one year. The increase difference between 2012 and 2011 was \$44,000,000.00. Better trained VSO's will be able to improve on this. We are asking for \$135,575 funding for this position.

(6) Website Upgrade – One time

During the last two legislative sessions we asked for our website upgrade that would convert our agency website to Drupal CMS enabling department staff to make content changes to the pages on the website. The website is still hosted by ND ITD and held to

the Web Standards in place. During the 2013-15 biennium we needed to have ITD analyze and estimate the cost to finish the website. The project is not completed and an estimated \$60,935 is needed to complete the website upgrade.

(7) Temp Employees

Temporary employee needed to assist NDDVA in collecting data, researching available resources, and contacting stakeholders required to complete projects and programs NDDVA's is working on. Such as Coordination of Mental health providers, Establishing a Veterans Court, establishing help for veterans with barriers to education due to; PTSD, reintegration issues, and TBI; coordinating opportunities for veteran entrepreneurs, employment opportunities, addressing veteran homelessness, transportation to medical services, establishing a Fischer House for the ND Veterans, Website data, healthcare and other benefits available to veterans. We are requesting \$59,488 for temporary employees.

(8) Service Dogs for Veterans with PTSD

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a real illness which greatly affects the quality of lives for well over 35% of our veterans. PTSD is also a large contributing factor in the alarming rate of suicides within our veteran community. Nationally it is estimated that a veteran will successfully commit suicide every 62 minutes which results in over 8,400 suicides per year. In 2012 North Dakota had 18 Veteran Suicides and 25 in 2011. As a comparison we have lost 26 North Dakotans in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001. We have lost over 230 North Dakotan Veterans to suicide since 2001 (without the 2013 numbers). These service dogs can greatly improve the quality of lives of our veterans who have many hidden injuries from their war experiences. The 63rd legislative assemblies SB 2344 appropriated \$50,000 to the NDDVA for the purchase of service dogs for our veterans. These funds will be used this biennium and with the number of applications coming in it is easy to see that more help is needed. We would like to continue this appropriation in our budget at \$100,000.

(9) Agent Orange Outreach

Agent Orange is a highly toxic herbicide used by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War to defoliate hiding places used by the Viet Cong, rice paddies and fields that provided them with food, and to clear the perimeters of military bases to give service members a clear line of fire. Although colorless, it is known as "Agent Orange" because of an orange band painted on the drums used to store and transports it. Over 50 diseases are linked to Agent Orange exposure to include diabetes, Parkinson's, heart diseases, many cancers and birth defects.

North Dakota's 63rd legislative assembly appropriated \$50,000 to NDDVA as grant funding to provide outreach to our Vietnam Veterans. NDDVA would like to continue the appropriation as part of its budget, again at \$50,000.

(10) Stand Downs

This appropriation is to provide funding for Stand Down events in communities across North Dakota. during the 2013-15 biennium Stand Down events were conducted in Bismarck, Minot, Dickinson, Williston, Bottineau, Watford City and Fargo. These events bring many organizations together in one place to provide service to our veteran's in need. The main focus is directed at homeless veterans. The veteran's service organizations in North Dakota conduct fund raising and use other resources for these events also. This funding is needed to ensure these events continue. During the current biennium the funding for stand down events were expended in the first year. Historically \$20,000 has been sufficient for the biennium and the Governor has agreed and returned the funding to \$20,000.

(11) Transportation Vans

NDDVA's budget for 2013-2015 included \$30,000 for the purchase of transportation vans. This funding along with funding from the Columbia Trust is used to purchase vans to transport veterans from across ND to the VAMC in Fargo. In working with the Columbia Trust NDDVA's has been able to purchase a van for \$14,000-\$14,500 during the last two bienniums. During the current biennium NDDVA purchased two vans. When we submit applications to the Columbia Trust we also request that the trust consider us for a free van, the trust provides 1 or 2 free vans nationwide each year. In 2014 North Dakota will receive a free van in addition to the vans we purchased. It is our expectation that we will only need to purchase one more van in the next biennium. The Governor agreed with this request so \$15,0000 funding for vans was put in the 2015-2017 biennium budget.

(12) Marketing / Advertising

The North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs has never had marketing - advertising funds to let our Veteran know who we are, where we are and what we do. Much less that we exist. One of the biggest comments we hear from veterans when we do our outreach events is they did not know there were state and county veteran service officers. From that many do not know of the benefits they have earned and the services that are available to them.

The quickest and most efficient method to get the word out to our Veterans is through marketing and advertising. As the agency charged with the care of our veterans we need to be the forefront in making contact with our veterans and their families. We are requesting \$20,000.

(13) Treatment/Study for Veterans with TBI

HeartSprings is proposing a half day transitional program to begin to heal the brain and body of four military clients living with a traumatic brain injury. The program would highlight changes and challenges and assess the progress and potential future programming to get our ND veterans back to work and/or improve their quality of life.

Military service members comprise the highest per capita of citizens in the state of North Dakota than any other state in the United States. Additionally, North Dakota has the highest suicide rate per capita of veterans in the United States. Sixty percent (60%) of the veterans returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) have sustained blast injuries and almost sixty-seven percent (66.7%) of these veterans are returning to civilian life with a traumatic brain injury. These veterans are North Dakota community members who primarily serve as members of the North Dakota National Guard. These are citizen soldiers, who return to North Dakota to their families and their communities after they have served our country in war. Their chronic illnesses are over burdening the Veterans Healthcare System and taking an extreme toll on their families. We are requesting \$108,352 for this issue.

Federal Funding potential changes: ND DVA has no current Federal Funding.

Thank you

Lonnie L. Wangen
Commissioner
ND DVA

Internal Control

In our audit for the two-year period ended June 30, 2012, we identified the following areas of the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs internal control as being the highest risk:

Internal Controls Subjected to Testing:

- Controls surrounding the processing of revenues.
- Controls surrounding the processing of expenditures.
- Controls effecting the safeguarding of assets.
- Controls relating to compliance with legislative intent
- Controls surrounding the ConnectND (PeopleSoft) system.

The criteria used to evaluate internal control is published in the publication *Internal Control – Integrated Framework* from the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations (COSO) of the Treadway Commission.

We gained an understanding of internal control surrounding these areas and concluded as to the adequacy of their design. We also tested the operating effectiveness of those controls we considered necessary based on our assessment of audit risk. We concluded that internal control was not adequate noting a certain matter involving internal control and its operation that we consider to be a significant deficiency.

Auditors are required to report deficiencies in internal control that are significant within the context of the objectives of the audit. A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent or detect (1) misstatements in financial or performance information, (2) violations of laws and regulations, or (3) impairments of effectiveness or efficiency of operations, on a timely basis. Considering both qualitative and quantitative factors, we identified the following significant deficiency in internal control. We noted another matter involving internal control that we have reported to management of the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs in a management letter dated June 6, 2013.

Bank Reconcilements (Finding 12-1)

Condition:

Bank reconcilements have not been done since October 2011 and have not been reviewed or approved since October 2010.

Criteria:

Good internal controls require that cash be reconciled at least monthly and material reconciling items be properly supported.

Cause:

Client did not understand the reconciliation program or formulas that were being used.

Effect or Potential Effect:

Without reconciling the book to bank balance, client cannot ensure all funds have been credited or charges debited and as a result there is an increased risk of preventing and detecting financial statement misstatements.

Recommendation:

We recommend that bank reconciliements be done monthly, reconciling the bank to the book balances and that these reconciliements be reviewed and approved by the Commissioner. We also recommend that all bank reconciliements be completed for fiscal year 2012.

North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Response/Planned Corrective Action:

ND Department of Veterans Affairs agrees with the recommendation. We will reconcile bank statement to book balances monthly and it will be reviewed and approved by Commissioner.

Management Letter (Informal Recommendation)

June 6, 2013

Mr. Lonnie Wangen, Commissioner
North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
4201 38th Street SW, Suite 104
Fargo, ND 58106-9003

Dear Mr. Wangen:

We have performed an audit of the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs for the two year period ended June 30, 2012, and have issued a report thereon. As part of our audit, we gained an understanding of the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs internal control structure to the extent we considered necessary to achieve our audit objectives. We also performed tests of compliance as described in the same report.

Our audit procedures are designed primarily to enable us to report on our objectives including those related to internal control and compliance with laws and regulations and may not bring to light all weaknesses in systems and procedures or noncompliance with laws and regulations which may exist. We aim, however, to use our knowledge of your organization gained during our work to make comments and suggestions which we hope will be useful to you.

In connection with the audit, gaining an understanding of the internal control structure, and tests of compliance with laws and regulations referred to above, we noted a condition we did not consider reportable within the context of your audit report. These conditions relate to areas of general business practice or control issues. We do, however, want to present our recommendation to you for your consideration and whatever follow-up action you consider appropriate. During the next audit we will determine if this recommendation has been implemented, and if not, we will reconsider their status.

The following presents our informal recommendation:

Deposit Review

Condition:

In our test of receipts, 11 of 25 deposit slips tested were not reviewed and none were reconciled to the remittance listing by an independent person.

Effect:

Without an independent verification, there is a greater risk that all funds may not be deposited.

Cause:

Persons approving were unaware of the remittance listing and the deposit slip was not made available for review.

Criteria:

Proper internal controls procedures require proper segregation of duties to minimize the risk of loss or undetected error should provide that an independent person agree the deposit slip to the remittance list.

Recommendation:

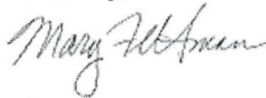
We recommend the deposit slip be agreed to the remittance list by an independent person and that person initial and date the deposit slip to show this review.

North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Response/Planned corrective Actions:

ND Department of Veterans Affairs agrees. We will ensure that the deposits are agreed with the remittance listing by an independent person and initialed.

I encourage you to call me at 701-239-7290 or an audit manager at 701-239-7289 if you have any questions about the implementation of recommendations included in your audit report or this letter.

Sincerely,



Mary Feltman
Auditor in-charge

REQUESTED RECOMMENDATION COMPARISON SUMMARY

321 Department of Veterans Affairs
Biennium: 2015-2017

Bill#: HB1025

Description	Expenditures Prev Biennium 2011-2013	Present Budget 2013-2015	2015-2017 Requested		Requested Budget 2015-2017	2015-2017 Recommended		Executive Recommendation 2015-2017
			Incr(Decr)	% Chg		Incr(Decr)	% Chg	
By Major Program								
Veterans Affairs Administration	1,384,927	1,723,636	(385,755)	(22.4%)	1,337,881	141,745	8.2%	1,865,381
Total Major Programs	1,384,927	1,723,636	(385,755)	(22.4%)	1,337,881	141,745	8.2%	1,865,381
Accrued Leave Payments	0	10,123	(10,123)	(100.0%)	0	0	0.0%	0
Technology Project Carry	0	7,933	(7,933)	(100.0%)	0	0	0.0%	0
Transport Vans	0	30,000	(30,000)	(100.0%)	0	(15,000)	(50.0%)	15,000
Grants - Agent Orange	0	50,000	(50,000)	(100.0%)	0	0	0.0%	0
Veterans' Affairs Administration	1,384,927	1,375,580	(37,699)	(2.7%)	1,337,881	474,801	34.5%	1,850,381
General Fund Transfer	0	250,000	(250,000)	(100.0%)	0	0	0.0%	0
Total Line Items	1,384,927	1,723,636	(385,755)	(22.4%)	1,337,881	141,745	8.2%	1,865,381
By Funding Source								
General Fund	1,384,927	1,723,636	(385,755)	(22.4%)	1,337,881	(151,188)	(8.8%)	1,572,448
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0.0%	0	292,933	0.0%	292,933
Special Funds	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0
Total Funding Source	1,384,927	1,723,636	(385,755)	(22.4%)	1,337,881	141,745	8.2%	1,865,381
Total FTE	7.00	8.00	0.00	0.0%	8.00	1.00	12.5%	9.00

12

Organizational Status Report by Summary Account

For the Month Ending Nov 2014

Percent of Biennium Remaining - 29%

Business Unit: 32100 Veterans Affairs

	<u>Biennium to Date</u>		Total Budget	Total Budget Remaining	Percent Budget Remaining	Percent Remaining - Biennium Remaining
	Actuals	Budget				
Revenues						
442000 - Cash/Investment Earnings	138.45			(138.45)		
472000 - Leases, Rents, and Royalties	5,824.00			(5,824.00)		
473000 - Miscellaneous General Revenue	191,566.51			(191,566.51)		
476000 - Loan Related Revenues	28,680.61			(28,680.61)		
Total Revenues	226,209.57			(226,209.57)		
Revenue by Source						
Total General Funds	6,616.80			(6,616.80)		
Total Special Funds	219,592.77			(219,592.77)		
Total Revenue by Source	226,209.57			(226,209.57)		
Expenditures						
511000 - Salaries - Permanent	465,277.16	498,943.63	704,391.00	239,113.84	34%	5%
513000 - Temporary Salaries	1,730.00			(1,730.00)		
516000 - Fringe Benefits	219,350.22	205,751.71	290,473.00	71,122.78	24%	-5%
Total 510000 - Salaries and Benefits	686,357.38	704,695.33	994,864.00	308,506.62	31%	2%
521000 - Travel	64,233.26	67,283.88	94,989.00	30,755.74	32%	3%
531000 - Supplies - IT Software	11,398.40	5,853.67	8,264.00	(3,134.40)	-38%	-67%
532000 - Supply/Material - Professional	1,473.09	1,487.50	2,100.00	626.91	30%	1%
533000 - Food and Clothing	92.34	141.67	200.00	107.66	54%	25%
534000 - Bldg, Grounds, Vehicle Supply	5,499.84	5,704.21	8,053.00	2,553.16	32%	3%
535000 - Miscellaneous Supplies	916.93	122.54	173.00	(743.93)	-430%	-459%
536000 - Office Supplies	5,076.71	4,983.83	7,036.00	1,959.29	28%	-1%
541000 - Postage	2,869.41	2,837.58	4,006.00	1,136.59	28%	-1%
542000 - Printing	1,359.04	2,231.25	3,150.00	1,790.96	57%	28%
551000 - IT Equipment under \$5,000	5,568.74	6,270.17	8,852.00	3,283.26	37%	8%
552000 - Other Equipment under \$5,000		177.08	250.00	250.00	100%	71%
553000 - Office Equip & Furniture-Under	930.00	637.50	900.00	(30.00)	-3%	-33%
561000 - Utilities	3,657.06	5,029.17	7,100.00	3,442.94	48%	19%
571000 - Insurance	1,417.11	1,241.00	1,752.00	334.89	19%	-10%
581000 - Rentals/Leases-Equipment&Other	5,062.86	4,925.75	6,954.00	1,891.14	27%	-2%

	Biennium to Date		Total Budget	Total Budget Remaining	Percent Budget Remaining	Percent Remaining - Biennium
	Actuals	Budget				
582000 - Rentals/Leases - Bldg/Land	58,091.82	57,523.75	81,210.00	23,118.18	28%	-1%
591000 - Repairs	592.33	956.96	1,351.00	758.67	56%	27%
601000 - IT - Data Processing	15,013.93	18,843.79	26,603.00	11,589.07	44%	14%
602000 - IT - Communications	10,845.14	13,529.17	19,100.00	8,254.86	43%	14%
603000 - IT Contractual Services and Re	15,151.70	20,140.33	28,433.40	13,281.70	47%	18%
611000 - Professional Development	4,133.37	3,623.83	5,116.00	982.63	19%	-10%
621000 - Operating Fees and Services	510.50	1,622.79	2,291.00	1,780.50	78%	49%
623000 - Professional Fees and Services	443.70	14,796.38	20,889.00	20,445.30	98%	69%
Total 520000 - Operating Expenses	214,337.28	239,963.78	338,772.40	124,435.12	37%	8%
692000 - Motor Vehicles	15,000.00	21,250.00	30,000.00	15,000.00	50%	21%
Total 681000 - Capital Assets	15,000.00	21,250.00	30,000.00	15,000.00	50%	21%
712000 - Grants, Benefits & Claims	59,900.00	77,916.67	110,000.00	50,100.00	46%	16%
722000 - Transfers Out	250,000.00			(250,000.00)		
Total 700000 - Grants, Refunds & Transfers	309,900.00	77,916.67	110,000.00	(199,900.00)	-182%	-211%
Total Expenditures	1,225,594.66	1,043,825.78	1,473,636.40	248,041.74	17%	-12%

Expenditures by Source

Total General Funds	1,225,594.66	1,043,825.78	1,473,636.40	248,041.74	17%
Total Expenditures by Source	1,225,594.66	1,043,825.78	1,473,636.40	248,041.74	17%

Agency Department of Veterans Affairs
 Program 100 Veterans Affairs Administration
 Reporting Level 00-321-100-00-00-00-00000000

1 Object/Revenue		2 2013-15 First Year Expenditures	3 2013-15 Biennium Appropriation	4 Remove Capital and One Time	5 2015-17 Base Budget Changes	6 2015-17 Total Changes	7 2015-17 Recommendation
Description	Code						
EXPENDITURES							
Salaries - Permanent	511000	693	10,123	0	0	(10,123)	0
Accrued Leave Payments	12	693	10,123	0	0	(10,123)	0
IT Contractual Svcs and Rprs	603000	7,933	7,933	(7,933)	0	(7,933)	0
Technology Project Carry	51	7,933	7,933	(7,933)	0	(7,933)	0
Motor Vehicles	692000	15,000	30,000	(30,000)	15,000	(15,000)	15,000
Transport Vans	52	15,000	30,000	(30,000)	15,000	(15,000)	15,000
Grants, Benefits & Claims	712000	29,446	50,000	(50,000)	0	(50,000)	0
Grants - Agent Orange	60	29,446	50,000	(50,000)	0	(50,000)	0
Salaries - Permanent	511000	308,723	661,906	0	160,680	207,086	868,992
Health Increase	511012	0	0	0	0	0	38,858
Retirement Increase	511013	0	0	0	0	0	6,519
Salary Budget Adjustment	511900	0	0	0	15,111	15,111	15,111
Salaries - Other	512000	0	0	0	55,100	55,100	55,100
Fringe Benefits	516000	145,491	298,093	0	55,856	89,817	387,910
Travel	521000	39,146	95,399	0	7,500	7,500	102,899
Supplies - IT Software	531000	5,475	14,264	0	500	500	14,764
Supply/Material-Professional	532000	1,664	2,100	0	1,000	1,000	3,100
Food and Clothing	533000	70	200	0	(100)	(100)	100
Bldg, Ground, Maintenance	534000	3,637	8,053	0	0	0	8,053
Miscellaneous Supplies	535000	173	173	0	1,500	1,500	1,673
Office Supplies	536000	3,371	8,036	0	3,500	3,500	11,536
Postage	541000	2,952	6,006	0	1,500	1,500	7,506
Printing	542000	743	3,150	0	3,000	3,000	6,150
IT Equip Under \$5,000	551000	4,823	18,852	0	1,878	1,878	20,730
Other Equip Under \$5,000	552000	0	250	0	0	0	250
Office Equip & Furn Supplies	553000	0	900	0	(400)	(400)	500
Utilities	561000	2,503	7,100	0	0	0	7,100
Insurance	571000	1,518	2,752	0	1,270	1,270	4,022
Rentals/Leases-Equip & Other	581000	3,247	6,954	0	0	0	6,954
Rentals/Leases - Bldg/Land	582000	43,601	81,210	0	26,853	26,853	108,063
Repairs	591000	773	1,351	0	2,000	2,000	3,351
Salary Increase	599110	0	0	0	0	0	52,835
Benefit Increase	599160	0	0	0	0	0	10,535
IT - Data Processing	601000	11,240	27,603	0	3,171	3,171	30,774
IT - Communications	602000	8,565	19,100	0	(932)	(932)	18,168
IT Contractual Svcs and Rprs	603000	8,487	21,832	(15,000)	(2,500)	(17,500)	4,332
Professional Development	611000	1,946	6,116	0	3,500	3,500	9,616
Operating Fees and Services	621000	509	2,291	0	(300)	(300)	1,991

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Agency	Department of Veterans Affairs					
Program	100 Veterans Affairs Administration					
Reporting Level	00-321-100-00-00-00-00000000					

1 Object/Revenue Description	Code	2 2013-15 First Year Expenditures	3 2013-15 Biennium Appropriation	4 Remove Capital and One Time	5 2015-17 Base Budget Changes	6 2015-17 Total Changes	7 2015-17 Recommendation
Fees - Professional Services	623000	268	21,889	0	1,000	1,000	22,889
Grants, Benefits & Claims	712000	7,410	60,000	(50,000)	10,000	(40,000)	20,000
Veterans' Affairs Administration	70	606,335	1,375,580	(65,000)	350,687	366,054	1,850,381
Transfers Out	722000	250,000	250,000	(250,000)	0	(250,000)	0
General Fund Transfer	79	250,000	250,000	(250,000)	0	(250,000)	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURES for 100 Veterans Affairs Administration		909,407	1,723,636	(402,933)	365,687	32,998	1,865,381

MEANS OF FUNDING

State Approving Grant	F100	0	0	0	275,696	275,696	292,933
Federal Funds	FED	0	0	0	275,696	275,696	292,933
State General Fund	001	909,407	1,723,636	(402,933)	89,991	(242,698)	1,572,448
General Fund	GEN	909,407	1,723,636	(402,933)	89,991	(242,698)	1,572,448
TOTAL FUNDING for 100 Veterans Affairs Administration		909,407	1,723,636	(402,933)	365,687	32,998	1,865,381

AUTHORIZED EMPLOYEES

Vacant		0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
FTE		8.00	8.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.00
TOTAL AUTHORIZED EMPLOYEES for 100 Veterans Affairs Administration		8.00	8.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	9.00

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PTSD Service Dog Training and Application Update
Prepared by: Pamela Standing, SDA Executive Director
Date: January 14, 2015



Service Dog Training Program and ND Veteran Applicant Update

Since Service Dogs for America presented testimony and update on the program, August 14, 2015, the following has occurred:

- The PTSD Review was selected to include the following team members:
 - VA Physician
 - Licensed psychologist
 - Combat veteran and VA center counselor
 - Commissioner of ND Veteran Affairs
 - SDA's Master Trainer
 - Service connected community volunteer working with military with families
 - SDA executive director
- SDA presented the application process and documentation to the state's Veteran Service Officers.
- This presentation resulted in the ND Veteran applications being automated for easier completion, a special thank you to Dan Thorstad, VSO, VA regional office.
- This presentation resulted in two new applications, and a VSO volunteering to be a sponsor for any veteran receiving a service dog in his service area.
- Fundraising has continued for ND veterans, and two additional fundraisers are scheduled in February 2015 in both Minot and Jamestown, along with Giving Hearts Day. Our goal is \$40,000.
- Sargent County has continued a county wide fundraiser and named a younger dog in SDA's PTSD training program, Sarge and they have raised almost \$20,000 in the last 9-12 months. Sarge has attended many fundraising events in their county.
- The PTSD review team met and approved its first ND Veteran in October 2014.
- The first ND veteran was on campus and in training 10 days after being notified of his acceptance into the program.
- SDA now has 6 complete applications ready for review and will be meeting with the PTSD review team later this month. (2 army reservists, 2 air force, 1 army, 1 navy)
- SDA has another 5 ND veteran applications in process.
- Two veterans dropped out because the dog would make their disability visible.
- SDA has purchased and selected new dogs from private owners and rescue shelters to have dogs at different stages of training to meet the growing demand.
- SDA has also received calls from private owners wanting to donate dogs to the PTSD program.



Jason and service dog Chet

Jason is an Army Medic and served on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq. The dog we had originally picked for this veteran did not work out for him. Instead another dog stepped up and chose this veteran to be his human partner.

Because this veteran is a paramedic, we had to add specialized team training and partnered with the local fire and ambulance services.

They allowed us to bring Jason and Chet to participate in mock emergency runs. Chet was exposed

to the sirens, the flashing lights, remaining in a down stay while the crew worked and loaded the patient on board, was exposed to strangers, being separated during a medical emergency and passed with flying colors.. We are happy to announce today Chet goes on many emergency and non-emergency runs, he rides in the front between the two front seats of the ambulance.

Chet knows when the emergency is over, that is when he provides Jason the support he needs to decompress and not go into a panic attack or become hyper vigilant.

We are proud of the training and specialized training we provide in response to not only the needs of the veteran, but also the needs of their family. Our goal is to increase social interaction and support emotional well-being. Jason's family came and stayed on campus during his training. One of public access outings included a family outing. Chet joined that family for bowling and kept Jason's stress reduced in a very noisy public setting.

We also have two other veterans who are making themselves available to our new veterans to be there to answer questions, such as; "What do I do when people start coming up to me?" "I don't like drawing attention to myself; I was invisible before, now I am not." These veteran mentors have service dogs and can provide advice and support and share from their experiences. We are grateful for their commitment and time to help their fellow veterans.

New Developments

SDA has been receiving at least 1-2 inquiries each month from North Dakota veterans that own a dog they've bonded with, and would like us to help them train and eventually certify them as a working service dog team. In the past SDA has turned these types of requests away. We want to be responsive to these types of requests and will begin a pilot program with two veterans that live about 30 minutes away from campus. SDA must comply with its accreditation standards and will align with Assistance Dogs International's "owner-trained service dog guidelines."

We have developed the following criteria:

1. Owner must have proof of up to date vaccination records, to include current rabies tag and bordatella vaccine.
2. Dogs must be spayed/neutered
3. Dogs must be on monthly flea/tick and heartworm medications
4. Dogs must be potty-trained



5. Dog must have had some obedience training
6. Owner must have proof that the dog's hips and elbows have been x-rayed and are rated fair and above. SDA will allow for a waiver on the hips, but the veteran must show proof of annual hip/elbow check-ups.
7. Dogs must meet SDA's breed qualifications (SDA will not certify guard dog breeds like the Pitbull, Akita, Chow Chow, Rottweiler, Belgian Malinois, etc.)
8. All dogs must meet SDA's evaluation for temperament testing.
9. No dog will be certified for service until they reach the age of 18 – 24 months or older.

SDA will require the same criteria and paperwork for entering the owner trained certification program. This training will be set up three times a week. They can bring their dog to campus and train with our trainers and dogs.

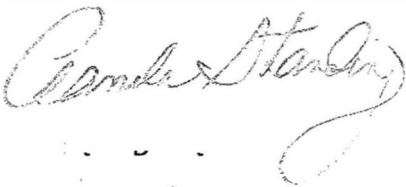
SDA anticipates this type of training will cost between \$5,000 to \$10,000, depending on the dog's age, the veteran completing all the required reading, lectures and training, canine good citizenship training and certification and public access outings and final testing. SDA will remain in the life of the dog and will maintain annual evaluations, recertification, additional training as needed, and communication with the veteran, their counselor and team sponsor, like any other team certified by SDA.

SDA's goal is remain responsive to this new trend. We have to balance a small staff with the growing demand. This fiscal year SDA will place 12-15 dogs. We hope that at least 8-10 of them are for ND veterans.

In closing, SDA will continue to do its small graduation ceremony on campus and we hope to have a graduation ceremony at the state capital in April 2015. All the veterans coming to campus will know there will be a more formal graduation event planned in Bismarck.

It our hope that this type of graduation ceremony will become an annual event in Bismarck!

Cynthia Standing



920 Short Street
Jud, ND 58454
701-685-2242

**House Appropriations Committee
Testimony on House Bill 1025
By Rhonda M. Schauer
January 15, 2015**

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Appropriations Committee, my name is Rhonda Schauer, Director for the North Dakota State Approving Agency. I appear in support of House Bill 1025.

State Approving Agencies (SAA's) are authorized by Title 38 of the United States Code. Each state has a SAA that is responsible for the approval of education and training programs to ensure that each program meets the requirements of Titles 38 and 10 of the United States Code. For veterans to receive education benefit payments, the education or training program in which they intend to enroll must be approved by the SAA. The SAA also provides continued program administrative oversight.

State Approving Agencies have six (6) core functions:

1. Approval of programs
2. Compliance visits to Schools and Training Establishments
3. Technical Assistance
4. Outreach
5. Liaison
6. Contract compliance

State Approving Agencies approve and monitor four (4) establishments:

1. IHL (Institutions of Higher Learning)
2. NCD (Non College Degree establishments)
3. OJT (on the job training)
4. Apprenticeship

The State Approving Agency function and budget has been housed within the North Dakota University System per Governor's assignment and legislative appropriation. HB 1025 would re-assign the function and budget from the North Dakota University System to the North Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs.

The bill before you includes a transfer of \$275,696 federal appropriation and 1.00 FTE for the State Approving Agency be from the North Dakota University System (HB1003) to the North Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs (HB1025). It should also be noted the SAA has a reserve fund that fluctuates between \$90-\$150,000 which accumulated over several years as a result of expenditures being less than the federal appropriation. This money is held in reserve to help offset any reductions in federal appropriation and unusual program expenses. These funds can only be used in support of the SAA program.

Re-assignment would provide an opportunity for the North Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs and North Dakota State Approving Agency to pool their resources and increase the number of veterans in the state who are eligible for their benefits. This re-assignment provides a necessary alignment of abilities so they can stand ready to meet the challenges before them.

The State Board of Higher Education supports this change. Thank you. I will try to answer any questions.

NORTH DAKOTA VETERANS COORDINATING COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

My name is Lyle Schuchard, I AM A MEMBER OF THE Legislative Committee of the North Dakota Veterans Coordinating Council. The Coordinating Council is made up of 15 members, 3 from each of the five veterans' organizations in North Dakota. They are:

American Legion

AMVETS

Disabled American Veterans

Veterans of Foreign Wars

Vietnam Veterans of America

I served in the United States Army for two years and in the Army Reserves for 26 years, retiring as a Sergeant Major. It is the policy of the Coordinating Council to support Legislation that will benefit the welfare of the members of the Armed Forces. The committee must concur totally, that is all 15 members must agree on the Legislation to be supported, or else it does not get the support.

In this case I have been instructed to recommend to this Legislative Committee that a "Do Pass" on HB 1025 is supported by the Veterans Coordinating Council.

If there are any questions I will try to answer them at this time.



STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
OFFICE OF STATE TREASURER
Kelly L. Schmidt, State Treasurer

HB 1025
01.15.15
#4

HB 1025

House Appropriations – Human Resources Division

Kelly Schmidt
State Treasurer

VETERANS POSTWAR TRUST FUND

In 1996, North Dakota citizens voted to create a constitutionally protected trust fund to provide benefits to existing and future veterans and their families. The State Treasurer is the trustee of the fund, which is to be invested to both survive in perpetuity and provide income to the Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACOVA) for grants and programs benefitting our veterans.

The current fund balance of the Veteran's Postwar Trust fund as of November 30, 2014 was \$5,056,477.31. As required by law, \$186,495.25 plus earnings for the remainder of this biennium will be distributed to the ACOVA at the beginning of the 2015-17 biennium.

By law, we are required to follow the Uniform Principal and Income Act (UPAIA) in determining the earnings amounts that are applied to "income" and distributed out to ACOVA vs. the amounts that are allocated to "principal" and retained for future growth. The UPAIA is spelled out in North Dakota Century Code 59-04.2. More specifically, NDCC 59-04.2-09 spells out the character of receipts and what is to be classified as income or principal.

In looking at UPAIA, earnings that are to be classified as "income" are generally interest, dividends and other miscellaneous receipts; earnings classified as "principal" are generally capital gains on the sale of stock and capital gain distributions.

In a rapidly increasing market environment similar to what we saw in FY 2014, we tend to see a larger amount of capital gains as stocks are generally sold at a gain. These capital gains earnings are classified as "principal" and are then retained for future

growth. Our current investment environment is the reason to see the disparity in percentages from the 2011-2013 biennium. The large change in percentages is solely due to the significant increase in capital gains realized during FY 2014.

Fund Costs/Fee's - Authority for payment of investment costs/fees are found in NDCC 21-10 and the Prudent Investor Rule. This law is applicable to all state investing.

The payment to ACOVA is defined in NDCC 37-14-14...this distribution schedule was brought forward by the AVOCA in a prior legislative session to address budgeting requirements.

2011-13 DISTRIBUTED INCOME

Total earnings for the 2011-2013 biennium were \$315,404.86. As required by law, \$262,371.92 was distributed to the ACOVA for its programs. This represents FY 2012 earnings of \$111,020.93 and FY 2013 earnings of \$151,350.99. The remaining \$53,032.94 increased the principal of the fund.

The Fund balance in their distributed account, commonly known as the 410 account, totaled \$128,229.68 as of December 31, 2014. This fund as with all funds managed by the Office of State Treasurer for the benefit of Veteran's received interest which is deposited into the fund.

MELVIN NORGDARD FUND

Melvin Norgard Fund balance \$317,814.38 as of December 31, 2014

Agency... Veterans Affairs
 Program 100 Veterans Affairs Administration
 Reporting Level 00-321-100-00-00-00-00000000

1 Object/Revenue		2 2011-13 Biennium Expenditures	3 2013-15 First Year Expenditures	4 2013-15 Biennium Appropriation	5 2015-17 Base Budget Changes	6 Compensation	7 2015-17 Recommendation
Decription	Code						
12 Accrued Leave Payments							
Salaries - Permanent	511000	0	693	10,123	0	0	0
TOTAL		0	693	10,123	0	0	0
MEANS OF FUNDING							
State General Fund	001	0	693	10,123	0	0	0
General Fund TOTAL		0	693	10,123	0	0	0
TOTAL		0	693	10,123	0	0	0
51 Technology Project Carry							
IT Contractual Srvc and Rprs	603000	0	7,933	7,933	0	0	0
TOTAL		0	7,933	7,933	0	0	0
MEANS OF FUNDING							
State General Fund	001	0	7,933	7,933	0	0	0
General Fund TOTAL		0	7,933	7,933	0	0	0
TOTAL		0	7,933	7,933	0	0	0
52 Transport Vans							
Motor Vehicles	692000	0	15,000	30,000	15,000	0	15,000
TOTAL		0	15,000	30,000	15,000	0	15,000
MEANS OF FUNDING							
State General Fund	001	0	15,000	30,000	15,000	0	15,000
General Fund TOTAL		0	15,000	30,000	15,000	0	15,000
TOTAL		0	15,000	30,000	15,000	0	15,000
60 Grants - Agent Orange							
Grants, Benefits & Claims	712000	0	29,446	50,000	0	0	0
TOTAL		0	29,446	50,000	0	0	0
MEANS OF FUNDING							
State General Fund	001	0	29,446	50,000	0	0	0
General Fund TOTAL		0	29,446	50,000	0	0	0
TOTAL		0	29,446	50,000	0	0	0
70 Veterans' Affairs Administration							
Salaries - Permanent	511000	522,162	308,723	661,906	160,680	0	868,992
Health Increase	511012	0	0	0	0	38,858	38,858
Retirement Increase	511013	0	0	0	0	6,519	6,519
Salary Budget Adjustment	511900	0	0	0	15,111	0	15,111
Salaries - Other	512000	0	0	0	55,100	0	55,100
Temporary Salaries	513000	988	0	0	0	0	0
Fringe Benefits	516000	236,598	145,491	298,093	55,856	0	387,910

#-1
 HB 1025 2/11/15

Agency Department of Veterans Affairs
 Program 100 Veterans Affairs Administration
 Reporting Level 00-321-100-00-00-00-00000000

1 Object/Revenue		2 2011-13 Biennium Expenditures	3 2013-15 First Year Expenditures	4 2013-15 Biennium Appropriation	5 2015-17 Base Budget Changes	6 Compensation	7 2015-17 Recommendation
Decription	Code						
Travel	521000	94,069	39,146	95,399	7,500	0	102,899
Supplies - IT Software	531000	13,539	5,475	14,264	500	0	14,764
Supply/Material-Professional	532000	2,456	1,664	2,100	1,000	0	3,100
Food and Clothing	533000	165	70	200	(100)	0	100
Bldg, Ground, Maintenance	534000	6,900	3,637	8,053	0	0	8,053
Miscellaneous Supplies	535000	14,977	173	173	1,500	0	1,673
Office Supplies	536000	11,949	3,371	8,036	3,500	0	11,536
Postage	541000	992	2,952	6,006	1,500	0	7,506
Printing	542000	2,486	743	3,150	3,000	0	6,150
IT Equip Under \$5,000	551000	16,839	4,823	18,852	1,878	0	20,730
Other Equip Under \$5,000	552000	4,806	0	250	0	0	250
Office Equip & Furn Supplies	553000	2,290	0	900	(400)	0	500
Utilities	561000	5,554	2,503	7,100	0	0	7,100
Insurance	571000	2,929	1,518	2,752	1,270	0	4,022
Rentals/Leases-Equip & Other	581000	6,808	3,247	6,954	0	0	6,954
Rentals/Leases - Bldg/Land	582000	71,051	43,601	81,210	26,853	0	108,063
Repairs	591000	1,199	773	1,351	2,000	0	3,351
Salary Increase	599110	0	0	0	0	52,835	52,835
Benefit Increase	599160	0	0	0	0	10,535	10,535
IT - Data Processing	601000	24,309	11,240	27,603	3,171	0	30,774
IT - Communications	602000	17,305	8,565	19,100	(932)	0	18,168
IT Contractual Svcs and Rprs	603000	37,919	8,487	21,832	(2,500)	0	4,332
Professional Development	611000	4,248	1,946	6,116	3,500	0	9,616
Operating Fees and Services	621000	493	509	2,291	(300)	0	1,991
Fees - Professional Services	623000	23,786	268	21,889	1,000	0	22,889
Motor Vehicles	692000	57,500	0	0	0	0	0
Grants, Benefits & Claims	712000	200,610	7,410	60,000	10,000	0	20,000
TOTAL		1,384,927	606,335	1,375,580	350,687	108,747	1,850,381
MEANS OF FUNDING							
State Approving Grant	F100	0	0	0	275,696	17,237	292,933
Federal Funds TOTAL		0	0	0	275,696	17,237	292,933
State General Fund	001	1,384,927	606,335	1,375,580	74,991	91,510	1,557,448
General Fund TOTAL		1,384,927	606,335	1,375,580	74,991	91,510	1,557,448
TOTAL		1,384,927	606,335	1,375,580	350,687	108,747	1,850,381
79 General Fund Transfer							
Transfers Out	722000	0	250,000	250,000	0	0	0
TOTAL		0	250,000	250,000	0	0	0
MEANS OF FUNDING							
State General Fund	001	0	250,000	250,000	0	0	0
General Fund TOTAL		0	250,000	250,000	0	0	0

Agency Department of Veterans Affairs
 Program 100 Veterans Affairs Administration
 Reporting Level 00-321-100-00-00-00-00000000

1 Object/Revenue Description Code	2 2011-13 Biennium Expenditures	3 2013-15 First Year Expenditures	4 2013-15 Biennium Appropriation	5 2015-17 Base Budget Changes	6 Compensation	7 2015-17 Recommendation
TOTAL	0	250,000	250,000	0	0	0
Agency TOTALS						
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	1,384,927	909,407	1,723,636	365,687	108,747	1,865,381
Federal Funds						
State Approving Grant F100	0	0	0	275,696	17,237	292,933
TOTAL	0	0	0	275,696	17,237	292,933
General Fund						
State General Fund 001	1,384,927	909,407	1,723,636	89,991	91,510	1,572,448
TOTAL	1,384,927	909,407	1,723,636	89,991	91,510	1,572,448
TOTAL FUNDING	1,384,927	909,407	1,723,636	365,687	108,747	1,865,381
AUTHORIZED EMPLOYEES						
FTE	7.00	8.00	8.00	0.00	0.00	8.00
Vacant	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
TOTAL AUTHORIZED EMPLOYEES	7.00	8.00	8.00	1.00	0.00	9.00

#2a HB 1025
2-4-15



Software Development Division Budget Estimate

To: Lonnie Wangen, Cathy Halgunseth ND Department of Veterans Affairs	Date Issued: 7/30/2014	Prior Est. Date: 7/23/2014
	From: Della Thorsness	
	Prepared By: Misty Curn	
Project Description: Add components to existing Drupal Website		
WMS Work Order Number: 229965	WMS Service Request: 1515649	

ITD is recommending your agency budget **\$60,935** for this project. This amount includes an estimated **\$55,395** based on requirements we received during the interview process plus an additional **\$5,540** for scope changes. The additional **10%** is based on ITD's experience with scope changes in projects this size. Including this additional amount will give your agency the flexibility to cover typical scope changes, and remain within your budgeted amount. A more accurate estimate will be prepared once this project has started and the analysis phase is completed. The cost to complete the analysis phase is estimated to be approximately **\$9,338**.

What you get for your money from ITD

ITD estimates that this website will take about **3 months** to complete. This timeframe is a projected timeframe based on typical project staffing levels. The actual timeframe will be determined during the Planning Phase and will be based on the availability of customer and ITD resources at that time.

ITD suggests you budget **\$20** per month for the on-going cost of maintenance. This amount includes the hosting charges, estimated storage and Software Development maintenance costs. All ITD services will be billed to your department monthly at actual cost.

Should you decide to proceed with this project, please approve the cost estimate via the online Work Management System. Upon your approval, you will be prompted to submit a service request under the existing work order. All ITD services relating to this project will be billed to your department monthly at actual cost.

At the start of the project ITD will review any estimate over 90 days old. If necessary a revised estimate will be issued.

'ITD - Software that works'

ITD Work Order and Service Request Number: 229965/1515649

Project: Add components to existing Drupal Website

Project Description

This project covers the following additional components North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs has requested for their Drupal website.

- Adding a running counter on each State Heroes overview page (Fallen, POW, MIA, Medal of Honor, Silver Star, etc)
- Adding a running counter on each State Heroes conflict page (Iraq, WWI, Vietnam, etc)
- Adding a running counter of heroes on each county page
- Add capability for Veterans Affairs to create North Dakota maps on their website. These maps can be added to any page and the data associated with each county could be changed by NDVA content managers.
- Build “search” functionality into NDVA website. This would appear similar to the search results page on www.yellowpages.com. The goal would be to allow end users to search for a particular service and they would get a list of NDVA-preferred providers that offer that service.

This budget cost estimate is being developed based on the above requirements provided by Lonnie Wangen, and a high level review of the current site.

Assumptions

The one-time costs (development) of the routines are based on the following assumptions:

- The cost estimate used the 2015-2017 biennium rate of \$115 per hour.
 - The website will continue to be hosted on the state apache web server. NDVA staff will not have access to the server, but will have access to change, edit, and update all content, files, menus, images, etc. on the Drupal site.
 - This estimate excludes the design/development of any new applications.
 - The site components will be rendered in markup language and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) consistent with current approved North Dakota Web Development Standards based on guidelines from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).
 - The site components will be designed with conformance to Level I & II W3C Web Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 (WCAG) in accordance with State of North Dakota Web Development Standards.
 - All North Dakota State Government development standards and policies will be implemented in the development of the new web site. The URL for North Dakota State Government development standards and policies is <http://www.nd.gov/itd/standards>.
 - The nd.gov banner will be displayed at the top of the web site per www.nd.gov/banner.
 - ND Veterans Affairs staff will be available as needed for questions and design meetings.
 - The project will follow ND ITD’s software development quality assurance methodology and processes
 - ND Veterans Affairs staff is responsible for securing any needed approvals from the owning agency for any data access needs, interfaces, waivers, etc. that may be necessary for this project.
- All updates to content will be done with a web browser through the administrative pages of the CMS. HTML knowledge is helpful, but not required.
- Due to the themed nature of the content, additional inline styling of content should be avoided. This may require using a simple text editor or a CMS tool to remove extraneous formatting from content copied from word processing software like MS Word.
- The website will secure user access to functionality using state Microsoft Active Directory accounts/groups.

- File names for documents should be created to conform to State of North Dakota standardized naming conventions. ITD file naming for web development utilizes only lowercase lettering together with dashes to separate words if necessary. The CMS may in some cases force compliance of these standards.
- We suggest all future documents be considered first for HTML conversion and only convert to RTF or PDF where necessary. HTML documents can be set up in a textual, printable format allowing the information to download at an acceptable speed over a dial-up connection.

Determining Costs

The Drupal will be built with the overall intent of making content entry and editing simple for the ND Department of Veterans Affairs staff while providing a user-friendly experience for site visitors.

The cost estimate was based on hours to build/create the following:

Content Types

Drupal refers to each piece of content as a node. It allows for the organization of nodes into groups called Content Types. This is used for organizational purposes, to make site updates easier, and to control access.

Views

“Views” refers to a function of Drupal that allows for the organization, grouping and filtering of content. This functionality may control display, format, and access to content. It may be used to generate reports, create summaries, and display collections of text, documents, images and other content. In this document, hours were estimated based on content types, complexity of displays, and the number of views that need to be created.

New Modules/Functionality

Costs have been included to analyze and determine the best approach to incorporate new features and modules to the site as deemed necessary by the requirements in the Project Description above.

Reviews

Reviews within the ITD web design staff will be conducted as needed for feedback during the phases of the web design projects.

Final Testing and Launching

Final tests are performed by ITD staff to ensure all parts of the websites are working correctly. Launch hours are used for moving the site from a development server to a production server.

Training

Training time has been included to show NDVA staff how to use the new components that are added to their Drupal website.

Breakdown of costs by component:

- \$3,388 - Adding a running counter on each State Heroes overview page (Fallen, POW, MIA, Medal of Honor, Silver Star, etc)
- \$3,388 - Adding a running counter on each State Heroes conflict page (Iraq, WWI, Vietnam, etc)
- \$3,388 - Adding a running counter of heroes on each county page
- \$25,322 - Add capability for Veterans Affairs to create North Dakota maps on their website. These maps can be added to any page and the data associated with each county could be changed by NDVA content managers.
- \$25,449 - Build “search” functionality into NDVA website. This would appear similar to the search results page on www.yellowpages.com. The goal would be to allow end users to search for a particular service and they would get a list of NDVA-preferred providers that offer that service.

One-Time Cost for System Development

The cost for development of the ND Department of Veterans Affairs website is estimated to be \$60,935. This amount includes an estimated \$55,395 based on requirements and an additional \$5,540 for scope changes. The additional 10% is based on ITD's experience with scope changes in projects this size. Including this additional amount will give your agency the flexibility to cover typical scope changes, and remain within your budgeted amount. A more accurate estimate will be prepared once this project has started and the analysis phase is completed.

Hosting

Monthly web hosting fees are based on the web site's functionality and disk usage. Current analysis suggests that the basic hosting fee of \$20 per month will continue to be sufficient.



Providing Customer-Centric Services

The Information Technology Department (ITD) provides technology leadership for state government and the people of North Dakota. ITD exists solely to help State agencies discover, assess, and implement information technologies. ITD's Software Development Division develops, implements, operates and supports software solutions that meet our customer's need as provided in this cost estimate. ITD also provides server computing, local and wide area network support, voice and data technologies, video conferencing, and other emerging technologies. The following overview describes the services ITD considers valuable to our customers. We hope you'll find this helpful in assessing the value of our services.

State Government IT Partner

ITD knows the business of North Dakota State government and understands inter-agency relationships. We've been servicing State agencies since 1968. Upon request, we'll provide references offering honest referrals about our services.

Our customer relationships are long-term partnerships.

Affordable Cutting Edge Technology

ITD helps agencies discover best fit solutions for their agency at affordable rates. ITD charges only to recover costs – we retain no profit with our low rates. Our staff is trained in many new and existing technologies, so we can readily assess customer requirements and provide solutions that best fit an agency's needs. ITD implements and supports IT solutions on modern hardware in modern facilities, using operating systems and software no older than current version minus 1.

Whenever it's necessary to extend our capabilities, we augment our current staff with outside vendors to meet demands.

Quality

ITD develops applications within the processes of a structured systems development methodology. This includes functional testing and all applications are tested for usability and performance (load tested). ITD Meets State & Federal Audit Compliance. Our infrastructure and operation processes are reviewed by and meet state and federal audit requirements. ITD Supports State Enterprise Architecture Standards, and our software and infrastructure meet North Dakota Enterprise Architecture standards.

We build compliance into our service offerings which relieves the customer of State standard compliance concerns.

Talented & Experienced Staff

ITD employees submit to an FBI background check and are bound by the same confidentiality requirements as agency staff. ITD's staff is cross-trained to provide continuous backup. We provide dedicated architects to design effective, top-notch infrastructure for security, system hosting, software development, and telecommunications. Our staff applies formal project management practices to all projects.

ITD strives to retain innovative, talented, and dedicated staff. ITD's staff is tenured with an average of 13 years of service.

Support Structure

ITD offers several levels of customer support, including 24 x 7 support for applications and infrastructure.

Customer Service Surveys indicate 99% of customers are very satisfied with our support.

Flexible Infrastructure

ITD's infrastructure and support structure are designed to meet varied needs. ITD designs and builds applications that can operate in a redundant environment. If one server fails, another server picks up the workload with little or no down time.

We can design and host any size application.

Disaster Recovery

ITD has the tools and resources required to monitor software applications and computer system infrastructure to assure adequate performance and up-time. Applications can be monitored on a 24 x 7 basis. If a disaster occurs in our Computer Systems area or Statewide Network, customer applications can be running within hours.

ITD's standard practice is to keep all data, applications, and systems backed up in a secure location to meet customer expectations.

Security

Investing in the infrastructure and training required to prevent malicious activity within our IT environment, ITD has dedicated staff to ensure that customer data and applications are secure.

We use source code control software to provide sound source code management.

[Back to Estimate](#)

Van replacement projections

	Model Year	License	Current Odometer	Current Annual Usage	Disposal Year if left at current location.
Cavalier	2005	VA15588	97,311 Miles	11268 miles	2018
Minot	2013	VA23117	45,356 Miles	31000 miles	2018
Lidgerwood	2013	VA23116	18,560 Miles	8448 miles	2019
Fargo	2014	VA23606	13,230 Miles	15240 miles	2021
Fargo	2009	VA20331	129,400 Miles		
Stanley	2014	VA23663	16,182 Miles	30624 miles	2019
Golden Valley	2009	VA20330	136,216 Miles	23304 miles	2015
Bismarck	2012	VA22337	19,936 Miles	9480 miles	2023
Bismarck	2012	VA22336	54558 Miles	19987 miles	2018

**Have funding in 2013-2015 biennium for one more van. Have ordered for spring of 2015 to replace Golden Valley van.

**Fargo van being used for trips to St. Cloud to take ND Veterans to higher level of care. Do not have current plans to replace this van when it reaches its useful life.

Standown grant costs

Date	Location	Initial Grant request	Grant Paid
Aug-13	Bismarck Amvets	\$5,000	\$ 4,726.36
Sep-13	Minot Area Homeless Coalition	\$5,000	\$ 831.18
Aug-14	Bismarck Amvets	\$5,000	\$ 3,242.46
Oct-14	Minot Area Homeless Coalition	1,200	\$ 1,100.00

Total: \$16,200 \$ 9,900.00

*Standowns held in Bottineau, Fargo, Grand Forks and Williston did not need funding from this grant.

*Bismarck 2014 standown requested \$5,000 however only \$3,242.46 remained in grant fund.

Map Directory for Stand Down (downstairs)

- 1) Welcome Table (Fill out clothing order **)
- 2) Veterans Administration (VA), Nurse (BP, Ear & Foot Checks)
- 3) Veterans Administration (VA), Baseline Physicals
- 4) Burleigh County Veterans Service Officer
- 5) Morton County Veterans Service Officer
- 6) North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
- 7) Job Service North Dakota
- 8) Military Service Center
- 9) Audiologist Information
- 10) Veterans Administration (VA), Women's Advocates
- 11) Veterans Administration (VA), Mental Health
- 12) Veterans Administration (VA), Substance Abuse
- 13) North Dakota Veterans Home
- 14) Vet Center (Vet Center also has their mobile unit outside)
- 15) North Dakota Veteran Cemetery
- 16) North Dakota State Approving Agency & (DOL Office of Apprenticeship & Training)
- 17) Veterans Administration (VA), Native American Outreach
- 18) Veterans Administration (VA), OEF/OIF
- 19) Veterans Administration (VA), Healthcare for Homeless Veterans
- 20) Veterans Administration (VA), Benefits
- 21) Veterans Administration (VA), Rater
- 22) Veterans Administration (VA), Suicide Prevention
- 23) Highway Department Information (ID's)
- 24) Hair Stylist
- 25) Hair Stylist
- 26) Lice prevention
- 27) Chaplain

** Clothing will be ready for you outside after you have finished inside with the meal and all of the other services on the upper & lower level.

Map Directory for Project Homeless Connect

- 1) Registration Area
- 2) Agency/ Volunteer Sign-in
- 3) Gate City Bank Bags & ND Housing Finance Agency Pens
- 4) Community Action
- 5) Salvation Army
- 6) Burleigh County Housing
- 7) Morton County Housing
- 8) Ruth Meiers Hospitality House
- 9) Adult Abuse Resource Center
- 10) West Central Human Service Center
- 11) Bismarck Emergency Food Pantry
- 12) Exit Gifts/ donations
- 13) Haircutting Stations Area
- 14) Social Security
- 15) Welcome House
- 16) Dakota Center for Independent Living
- 17) Legal Services of ND
- 18) Burleigh County Social Services
- 19) Bis-Man Transit and CAT
- 20) Youthworks
- 21) Department of Public Instruction
- 22) United Tribes Technical College
- 23) Job Service of ND
- 24) Experience Works
- 25) BECEP/ West River Head start
- 26) Bismarck Public Schools/ Carrie's Kids
- 27) Adult Learning Center
- 28) MSA United Way
- 29) Single Point of Entry/ ND Parole and Probation
- 30) Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health
- 31) Custer Public Health
- 32) NDSU Extension Family Nutrition Program
- 33) Bridging the Dental Gap
- 34) Medcenter One Nursing
- 35) West Dakota Chapter American Red Cross

Postwar Trust Fund
July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015
As of December 31, 2014

Revenue:

Previous Balance	28,325.51	
Interest Earnings from 2011-13	262,371.92	
Total Funds Available	\$290,697.43	
Interest Earned	\$152.58	(as of Nov 2014)
Additional Transfer	\$25,000.00	per ACOVA June 2014
Van Sales	\$14,000.00	
Transferred to Grants	-\$14,000.00	per ACOVA Sept 2014

Expenses:

2013 Funding	\$100,000.00
2014, 1st & 2nd Quarter Funding	50,000.00

** Committee approved \$25,000 per quarter

Liabilities:	Approved Funding	Expenditures	Remaining
Veteran's Affairs			
Grants	207,764.43	179,164.90	28,599.53
Commissioner's Dis. Fund	1,500.00	1,165.17	334.83
Unmet Needs Transportation	1,600.00	1,636.40	-36.40
Transportation Program			0.00
Lodging	5,500.00	4,515.20	984.80
Other Requests	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Liabilities	\$216,364.43	\$186,481.67	29,882.76
			29,882.76

** As of 1/31/2015 the grant program has an estimated \$78,308 in approved and obligated grants. We cannot approve any further grants until funding is available. PWTF interest earnings for 2013-2015 biennium will become available July 1, 2015.

Post War Trust Fund Historical Principal Balance beginning of biennium

Most recent balance (12/1/2014) as of Per treasurers website:	\$	5,853,952.00
**Includes legislative addition of \$250,000 to principal		
**Includes FY 2014 Payable interest income of \$146,771.47		
PWTF principal balance beginning of <u>2013-15</u> biennium	\$	4,311,188.90
PWTF principal balance beginning of <u>2011-13</u> biennium	\$	4,258,155.96
PWTF principal balance beginning of <u>2009-11</u> biennium	\$	3,889,103.00
PWTF principal balance beginning of <u>2007-09</u> biennium	\$	4,501,849.00

**It is the opinion of the ACOVA that the PWTF principal should be at \$10,000,000.00 so that it can provide interest earnings to care for our veterans current needs and principal growth to ensure interest earnings to care for our veterans in the future.

Wangen, Lonnie L.

From: Oehlke, Jeb D.
Sent: Monday, October 14, 2013 4:46 PM
To: Wangen, Lonnie L.
Cc: Skor, Ryan K.; VandeVenter, Shannon M.; Schmidt, Kelly L.
Subject: RE: ACOVA Meeting

Lonnie,

I had to revise the questions a little to provide the information I believe you are seeking:

PWTF 2011-13 Biennium End:

PWTF Combined Balance (Principal + Payable Income) June 30, 2013	\$4,573,560.82
FY 2012 Payable Income (moved to clearing acct. July 15, 2013)	(\$111,020.93)
FY 2013 Payable Income (moved to clearing acct. August 21, 2013)	(\$151,350.99)
Ending Principal Balance June 30, 2013	\$4,311,188.90

PWTF Beginning Balance 2013-15 Biennium

Beginning Principal Balance July 1, 2013	\$4,311,188.90
Legislative Addition to PWTF Principal	\$250,000.00
Principal Earnings during July 2013	\$28,639.05
Principal Balance July 31, 2013	\$4,589,827.95
Payable Income Earned during July 2013	\$10,135.24
PWTF Combined Balance (Principal + Payable Income) July 31, 2013	\$4,599,963.19

The allocations to principal and payable income are not calculated on a percentage basis.

- The Principal receives the gain/loss on the sales of securities and redemptions less ½ of the expenses
- The Payable Income receives the interest and dividends paid by the securities less ½ of the expenses

I hope this answers your questions. Let me know if you need anything else.

Jeb Oehlke

Deputy State Treasurer
701-328-2643

From: Wangen, Lonnie L.
Sent: Monday, October 14, 2013 11:54 AM
To: Oehlke, Jeb D.
Subject: RE: ACOVA Meeting

Jeb,

I would like a good starting point for this biennium and ending point for last biennium for the PWTF Principal to report to the ACOVA this week.

Could I get the missing information:

PWTF biennium end 2011-2013:

PWTF Principal balance June 30, 2013	\$
Moved to clearing account July 15 2013	-\$111,020.93

VETERANS POSTWAR TRUST FUND
NORTH DAKOTA STATE TREASURER
FISCAL YEAR 2013

	JULY 2012	AUGUST 2012	SEPTEMBER 2012	OCTOBER 2012	NOVEMBER 2012	DECEMBER 2012	JANUARY 2013	FEBRUARY 2013	MARCH 2013	APRIL 2013	MAY 2013	JUNE 2013	TOTAL FY2013
BALANCE SHEET													
FUNDS - EDWARD JONES INVESTMENTS -TOTAL	3,764,069.24	3,868,100.52	3,982,733.10	3,988,686.06	4,007,592.78	3,999,716.80	4,050,383.25	4,071,533.79	4,089,699.69	4,091,850.72	4,134,663.34	4,130,669.76	
FUNDS - EDWARD JONES MONEY MARKET -TOTAL	140,046.86	139,410.06	143,625.39	138,584.61	133,382.88	138,940.79	118,217.58	111,321.12	108,087.10	123,401.99	108,319.01	129,318.03	
CERTIFICATES OF DEPOSIT -TOTAL	494,000.00	395,000.00	296,000.00	296,000.00	296,000.00	296,000.00	296,000.00	296,000.00	296,000.00	296,000.00	296,000.00	296,000.00	
BANK OF NORTH DAKOTA SAVINGS ACCOUNT	15,310.92	15,739.66	16,084.31	16,336.59	16,518.13	16,690.49	16,872.22	17,017.31	17,147.04	17,290.56	17,429.50	17,573.03	
TOTAL ASSETS	4,413,457.02	4,419,250.24	4,438,442.80	4,439,607.26	4,453,493.79	4,451,348.08	4,481,473.05	4,495,872.22	4,510,933.83	4,528,543.27	4,556,411.85	4,573,560.82	
FUND EQUITY													
FUND BALANCE	4,387,800.60	4,413,457.02	4,419,250.24	4,438,442.80	4,439,607.26	4,453,493.79	4,451,348.08	4,481,473.05	4,495,872.22	4,510,933.83	4,528,543.27	4,556,411.85	
CHANGE IN FUND VALUE	25,656.42	5,793.22	19,192.56	1,164.46	13,886.53	(2,145.71)	30,124.97	14,399.17	15,061.61	17,609.44	27,868.58	17,148.97	
FUND DISTRIBUTION													
TOTAL FUND BALANCE	4,413,457.02	4,419,250.24	4,438,442.80	4,439,607.26	4,453,493.79	4,451,348.08	4,481,473.05	4,495,872.22	4,510,933.83	4,528,543.27	4,556,411.85	4,573,560.82	
INCOME STATEMENT													
INCOME													
DIVIDEND INCOME - EDWARD JONES INVESTMENTS -TOTAL	6,791.64	5,121.26	7,877.06	5,839.19	6,651.25	40,569.44	4,565.15	4,789.67	9,146.90	7,142.47	9,781.11	12,814.77	121,079.91
INTEREST INCOME - EDWARD JONES MONEY MKT -TOTAL	2,702.54	2,365.40	2,826.14	3,311.85	9,374.24	697.16	2,552.63	3,357.50	1,936.99	2,582.32	12,307.29	975.96	44,990.02
INTEREST INCOME - CD'S SUBTOTAL	497.72	427.42	343.34	250.90	180.18	171.45	175.86	144.44	129.00	142.81	138.20	142.81	2,744.13
BANK OF NORTH DAKOTA SAVINGS INTEREST INCOME	1.28	1.32	1.31	1.38	1.36	0.91	0.71	0.65	0.73	0.71	0.74	0.72	11.82
REALIZED GAIN/(LOSS)													
GAIN / (LOSS) SECURITY SALES -TOTAL	18,136.24	681.38	10,968.61	(5,412.11)	660.18	(40,769.01)	25,767.47	9,235.37	6,603.05	10,834.67	8,753.64	6,409.80	51,889.29
TOTAL INCOME	28,129.42	8,596.78	22,036.46	3,991.21	16,867.21	659.95	33,066.98	17,527.63	17,816.67	20,702.98	30,980.98	20,344.06	220,720.33
EXPENSES													
MANAGED FEE EXPENSE -TOTAL	2,473.00	2,803.56	2,870.15	2,826.75	2,928.69	2,805.66	2,942.01	3,016.75	2,755.06	3,093.54	3,016.25	3,195.09	34,726.51
MISC EXPENSES -TOTAL													
FOREIGN TAXES -TOTAL			(26.25)		51.99			111.71			96.15		233.80
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,473.00	2,803.56	2,843.90	2,826.75	2,980.68	2,805.66	2,942.01	3,128.46	2,755.06	3,093.54	3,112.40	3,195.09	34,960.11
EXPENSES CHARGED TO PRINCIPAL	1,236.50	1,401.78	1,421.95	1,413.38	1,490.34	1,402.83	1,471.01	1,564.23	1,377.53	1,546.77	1,566.20	1,597.55	17,480.06
EXPENSES CHARGED TO INCOME	1,236.50	1,401.78	1,421.95	1,413.38	1,490.34	1,402.83	1,471.01	1,564.23	1,377.53	1,546.77	1,566.20	1,597.55	17,480.06
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,473.00	2,803.56	2,843.90	2,826.75	2,980.68	2,805.66	2,942.01	3,128.46	2,755.06	3,093.54	3,112.40	3,195.09	34,960.11
PAYABLE INCOME	8,756.68	6,513.62	9,625.90	7,989.95	14,716.69	40,026.13	5,828.51	6,728.03	9,836.09	8,321.54	20,671.14	12,336.72	151,350.99
DISTRIBUTIONS TO ACOVA													
CHANGE IN FUND VALUE	25,656.42	5,793.22	19,192.56	1,164.46	13,886.53	(2,145.71)	30,124.97	14,399.17	15,061.61	17,609.44	27,868.58	17,148.97	185,760.22

VETERANS PENSION TRUST FUND
NORTH DAKOTA STATE TREASURER

FISCAL YEAR 2011

	JULY 2010	AUGUST 2010	SEPTEMBER 2010	OCTOBER 2010	NOVEMBER 2010	DECEMBER 2010	JANUARY 2011	FEBRUARY 2011	MARCH 2011	APRIL 2011	MAY 2011	JUNE 2011	TOTAL FY 2011
BALANCE SHEET													
FUNDS - EDWARD JONES INVESTMENTS - TOTAL	3,108,909.10	3,108,944.00	3,114,278.74	3,127,299.80	3,142,815.04	3,179,960.14	3,197,881.10	3,198,889.96	3,212,806.79	3,213,902.66	3,216,025.06	3,239,061.48	
FUNDS - EDWARD JONES MONEY MARKET - TOTAL	99,431.18	102,405.27	104,261.28	92,130.51	90,698.32	82,962.03	72,793.42	74,559.58	69,647.18	70,291.29	90,793.05	94,488.80	
CERTIFICATES OF DEPOSIT - TOTAL	974,000.00	974,000.00	974,000.00	974,000.00	974,000.00	874,000.00	874,000.00	874,000.00	874,000.00	874,000.00	874,000.00	874,000.00	
BANK OF NORTH DAKOTA SAVINGS ACCOUNT	12,949.90	14,950.00	16,698.31	2,388.74	4,130.60	105,852.44	107,200.77	108,480.15	109,479.84	85,501.93	49,518.52	50,605.68	
TOTAL ASSETS	4,195,290.18	4,200,299.27	4,209,238.33	4,195,819.05	4,211,643.96	4,242,774.61	4,251,875.29	4,255,929.69	4,265,933.81	4,243,695.88	4,230,336.63	4,258,155.96	
FUND EQUITY													
FUND BALANCE	4,214,107.72	4,195,290.18	4,200,299.27	4,209,238.33	4,195,819.05	4,211,643.96	4,242,774.61	4,251,875.29	4,255,929.69	4,265,933.81	4,243,695.88	4,230,336.63	
CHANGE IN FUND VALUE	6,182.46	5,009.09	8,939.06	11,580.72	15,824.91	31,130.65	9,100.68	4,054.40	10,004.12	2,762.07	23,751.86	27,819.33	
FUND DISTRIBUTION	25,000.00	-	-	25,000.00						25,000.00	37,111.11		
TOTAL FUND BALANCE	4,195,290.18	4,200,299.27	4,209,238.33	4,195,819.05	4,211,643.96	4,242,774.61	4,251,875.29	4,255,929.69	4,265,933.81	4,243,695.88	4,230,336.63	4,258,155.96	
INCOME STATEMENT													
INCOME													
DIVIDEND INCOME - EDWARD JONES INVESTMENTS - TOTAL	6,557.19	3,343.93	3,805.55	5,538.61	2,675.33	14,268.96	3,770.35	2,759.82	3,878.85	4,398.91	6,451.00	7,142.70	64,591.20
INTEREST INCOME - EDWARD JONES MONEY MKT - TOTAL	0.51	1,026.25	2,168.75	2,525.61	10,339.13	766.36	1,518.74	2,503.16	2,919.41	1,749.62	10,397.36	(20.13)	35,894.77
INTEREST INCOME - CD'S SUBTOTAL	1,902.67	1,996.69	1,745.09	1,689.67	1,741.21	1,718.06	1,325.71	1,258.72	976.85	1,006.74	1,116.32	1,078.93	17,556.66
BANK OF NORTH DAKOTA SAVINGS INTEREST INCOME	3.02	3.41	3.22	0.76	0.65	3.78	22.62	20.66	22.84	15.35	11.38	8.23	115.92
REALIZED GAIN/(LOSS)													
GAIN / (LOSS) SECURITY SALES - TOTAL	732.40	1,617.25	4,246.46	4,795.42	4,066.25	17,424.18	6,540.16	1,928.96	6,196.32	133.52	10,889.00	24,817.30	83,387.22
TOTAL INCOME	9,195.79	7,987.53	11,969.07	14,550.07	18,822.57	34,181.34	13,177.58	8,471.32	13,994.27	7,304.14	28,865.06	33,027.03	201,545.77
EXPENSES													
MANAGED FEE EXPENSE - TOTAL	2,825.58	2,945.24	2,970.06	2,952.88	2,985.08	2,947.11	4,051.31	4,307.28	3,959.87	4,365.07	4,291.86	4,463.14	43,064.48
MISC EXPENSES - TOTAL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
FOREIGN TAXES - TOTAL	187.75	33.20	59.95	16.47	12.58	103.58	25.59	109.64	30.28	177.00	821.34	744.56	2,321.94
TOTAL EXPENSES	3,013.33	2,978.44	3,030.01	2,969.35	2,997.66	3,050.69	4,076.90	4,416.92	3,990.15	4,542.07	5,113.20	5,207.70	45,386.42
EXPENSES CHARGED TO PRINCIPAL	1,506.67	1,489.22	1,515.01	1,484.68	1,498.83	1,525.35	2,038.45	2,208.46	1,995.08	2,271.04	2,556.60	2,603.85	22,693.21
EXPENSES CHARGED TO INCOME	1,506.67	1,489.22	1,515.01	1,484.68	1,498.83	1,525.35	2,038.45	2,208.46	1,995.08	2,271.04	2,556.60	2,603.85	22,693.21
TOTAL EXPENSES	3,013.33	2,978.44	3,030.01	2,969.35	2,997.66	3,050.69	4,076.90	4,416.92	3,990.15	4,542.07	5,113.20	5,207.70	45,386.42
NET INCOME	6,182.46	5,009.09	8,939.06	11,580.72	15,824.91	31,130.65	9,100.68	4,054.40	10,004.12	2,762.07	23,751.86	27,819.33	156,159.35
PAYABLE INCOME	6,956.73	4,881.06	6,207.61	8,269.98	13,257.49	15,231.82	4,598.97	4,333.90	5,802.88	4,899.59	15,419.46	5,605.88	95,465.34
DISTRIBUTIONS TO ACOVA	25,000.00	-	-	25,000.00						25,000.00	37,111.11		112,111.11
CHANGE IN FUND VALUE	6,182.46	5,009.09	8,939.06	11,580.72	15,824.91	31,130.65	9,100.68	4,054.40	10,004.12	2,762.07	23,751.86	27,819.33	156,159.35

Veteran's Postwar Trust Fund

Biennial 07-09 Report

As of June 30, 2009

Presented to ACOVA August 21, 2009

Assets:

Bonds & Marketable Securities (Edward Jones 6-30-09)	\$2,659,685
Money Market Account (Edward Jones 6-30-09)	\$150,238
Bank CDs	\$974,000
BND mmda account #4200499 balance as of 6-30-09)	\$105,180

Total Assets **\$3,889,103**

Liabilities:

	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Funded</u>	<u>Unfunded</u>
Restricted Account for 07-09*	50,000	50,000	0
Veteran's Affairs			
ACOVA Meetings	5,000	2,500	2,500
Operations	0	0	0
Appeals Committee	1,000	700	300
Grants	285,000	310,000	-25,000
Transportation Program			
Lodging	4,000	3,100	900
Vans	30,000	30,500	-500
Van Sale	-7,000	-7,000	0
Veterans Preference	10,000	10,000	0
Veteran's Home			
Building Project**	0	0	0
Activity Fund	20,000	20,000	0
Circuit Training Equipment	6,500	6,500	0
Automatic External Defibrillators	1,270	1,270	0
Social Services	5,000	2,500	2,500
DAV Transportation	1,500	500	1,000
StandDown	4,000	4,000	0
Total Liabilities	416,270	434,570	-18,300

Fund Assets by Principal and Interest

Current Value of the Veterans Post War Trust Fund @ 6-30-09)	<u>\$3,889,103</u>
Veterans Post War Trust Fund Original balance	4,101,849
Change from original balance	<u>(212,746.09)</u>



Kelly L. Schmidt
 State Treasurer

Veteran's Postwar Trust Fund
Biennial 05-07 Report
As of July 31, 2007

Assets:

Bonds & Marketable Securities (Edward Jones 7-31-07)	\$3,793,431.00
Money Market Account (Edward Jones 7-31-07)	\$97,807.00
Bank CDs - fund principal	\$589,000.00
Reserve Account - CDs	\$400,000.00
Bank CD - fund interest	\$49,000.00
BND mmda account #4200499 balance as of 7-31-07	\$69,872.99
Total Assets	\$4,999,110.99

Liabilities:

	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Funded</u>	<u>Unfunded</u>
Reserve Account for 07-09	0.00	0.00	0.00
Veteran's Affairs			
ACOVA Meetings	5,900.00	0.00	5,900.00
Chairman	0.00	0.00	0.00
Operations	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00
Appeals Committee	200.00	0.00	200.00
Grants	80,000.00	10,000.00	70,000.00
Transportation Program			
Lodging	0.00	0.00	0.00
Vans	50,000.00	0.00	50,000.00
Veterans Preference	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00
Veteran's Home			
Activity Fund	5,000.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
Marketing	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00
DAV Transportation	0.00	0.00	0.00
StandDown	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00
Total Liabilities	163,600.00	12,500.00	151,100.00

Fund Assets by Principal and Interest

Current Value of the Veterans Post War Trust Fund @ 7/31/2007	\$4,999,110.99
Reserve Accounts	
Permanent Veterans Post War Trust Fund Reserve	4,101,849
Board Authorized Reserve Account	400,000
Total Reserve Accounts	4,501,849.00
Funds available in excess of Reserve Accounts	497,261.99
Less current unfunded liabilities	(151,100.00)
Funds Available @ 7/31/2007	346,161.99
Plus estimated earning to accrue thru Dec 31, 2007	88,000.00
Estimated uncommitted cash flow thru Dec 31, 2007	\$434,161.99

SERVICE DOGS FOR AMERICA



“CHET”

PTSD Service Dog Training and Application Update
Prepared by: Pamela Standing, SDA Executive Director
Date: January 14, 2015



Service Dog Training Program and ND Veteran Applicant Update

Since Service Dogs for America presented testimony and update on the program, August 14, 2015, the following has occurred:

- The PTSD Review was selected to include the following team members:
 - VA Physician
 - Licensed psychologist
 - Combat veteran and VA center counselor
 - Commissioner of ND Veteran Affairs
 - SDA's Master Trainer
 - Service connected community volunteer working with military with families
 - SDA executive director
- SDA presented the application process and documentation to the state's Veteran Service Officers.
- This presentation resulted in the ND Veteran applications being automated for easier completion, a special thank you to Dan Thorstad, VSO, VA regional office.
- This presentation resulted in two new applications, and a VSO volunteering to be a sponsor for any veteran receiving a service dog in his service area.
- Fundraising has continued for ND veterans, and two additional fundraisers are scheduled in February 2015 in both Minot and Jamestown, along with Giving Hearts Day. Our goal is \$40,000.
- Sargent County has continued a county wide fundraiser and named a younger dog in SDA's PTSD training program, Sarge and they have raised almost \$20,000 in the last 9-12 months. Sarge has attended many fundraising events in their county.
- The PTSD review team met and approved its first ND Veteran in October 2014.
- The first ND veteran was on campus and in training 10 days after being notified of his acceptance into the program.
- SDA now has 6 complete applications ready for review and will be meeting with the PTSD review team later this month. (2 army reservists, 2 air force, 1 army, 1 navy)
- SDA has another 5 ND veteran applications in process.
- Two veterans dropped out because the dog would make their disability visible.
- SDA has purchased and selected new dogs from private owners and rescue shelters to have dogs at different stages of training to meet the growing demand.
- SDA has also received calls from private owners wanting to donate dogs to the PTSD program.



Jason and service dog Chet

Jason is an Army Medic and served on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq. The dog we had originally picked for this veteran did not work out for him. Instead another dog stepped up and chose this veteran to be his human partner.

Because this veteran is a paramedic, we had to add specialized team training and partnered with the local fire and ambulance services.

They allowed us to bring Jason and Chet to participate in mock emergency runs. Chet was exposed

to the sirens, the flashing lights, remaining in a down stay while the crew worked and loaded the patient on board, was exposed to strangers, being separated during a medical emergency and passed with flying colors.. We are happy to announce today Chet goes on many emergency and non-emergency runs, he rides in the front between the two front seats of the ambulance.

Chet knows when the emergency is over, that is when he provides Jason the support he needs to decompress and not go into a panic attack or become hyper vigilant.

We are proud of the training and specialized training we provide in response to not only the needs of the veteran, but also the needs of their family. Our goal is to increase social interaction and support emotional well-being. Jason's family came and stayed on campus during his training. One of public access outings included a family outing. Chet joined that family for bowling and kept Jason's stress reduced in a very noisy public setting.

We also have two other veterans who are making themselves available to our new veterans to be there to answer questions, such as; "What do I do when people start coming up to me?" "I don't like drawing attention to myself; I was invisible before, now I am not." These veteran mentors have service dogs and can provide advice and support and share from their experiences. We are grateful for their commitment and time to help their fellow veterans.

New Developments

SDA has been receiving at least 1-2 inquiries each month from North Dakota veterans that own a dog they've bonded with, and would like us to help them train and eventually certify them as a working service dog team. In the past SDA has turned these types of requests away. We want to be responsive to these types of requests and will begin a pilot program with two veterans that live about 30 minutes away from campus. SDA must comply with its accreditation standards and will align with Assistance Dogs International's "owner-trained service dog guidelines."

We have developed the following criteria:

1. Owner must have proof of up to date vaccination records, to include current rabies tag and bordatella vaccine.
2. Dogs must be spayed/neutered
3. Dogs must be on monthly flea/tick and heartworm medications
4. Dogs must be potty-trained



5. Dog must have had some obedience training
6. Owner must have proof that the dog's hips and elbows have been x-rayed and are rated fair and above. SDA will allow for a waiver on the hips, but the veteran must show proof of annual hip/elbow check-ups.
7. Dogs must meet SDA's breed qualifications (SDA will not certify guard dog breeds like the Pitbull, Akita, Chow Chow, Rottweiler, Belgian Malinois, etc.)
8. All dogs must meet SDA's evaluation for temperament testing.
9. No dog will be certified for service until they reach the age of 18 – 24 months or older.

SDA will require the same criteria and paperwork for entering the owner trained certification program. This training will be set up three times a week. They can bring their dog to campus and train with our trainers and dogs.

SDA anticipates this type of training will cost between \$5,000 to \$10,000, depending on the dog's age, the veteran completing all the required reading, lectures and training, canine good citizenship training and certification and public access outings and final testing. SDA will remain in the life of the dog and will maintain annual evaluations, recertification, additional training as needed, and communication with the veteran, their counselor and team sponsor, like any other team certified by SDA.

SDA's goal is remain responsive to this new trend. We have to balance a small staff with the growing demand. This fiscal year SDA will place 12-15 dogs. We hope that at least 8-10 of them are for ND veterans.

In closing, SDA will continue to do its small graduation ceremony on campus and we hope to have a graduation ceremony at the state capital in April 2015. All the veterans coming to campus will know there will be a more formal graduation event planned in Bismarck.

It our hope that this type of graduation ceremony will become an annual event in Bismarck!

Respectfully,
Cynthia Stenberg



920 Short Street
Jud, ND 58454
701-685-2242

ND Veteran/Military Suicides

Year Suicides

2001	24
2002	18
2003	15
2004	17
2005	24
2006	18
2007	27
2008	14
2009	14
2010	24
2011	25
2012	18
2013	22

Total: 260

#3 HB1025
2/4/15

Questions

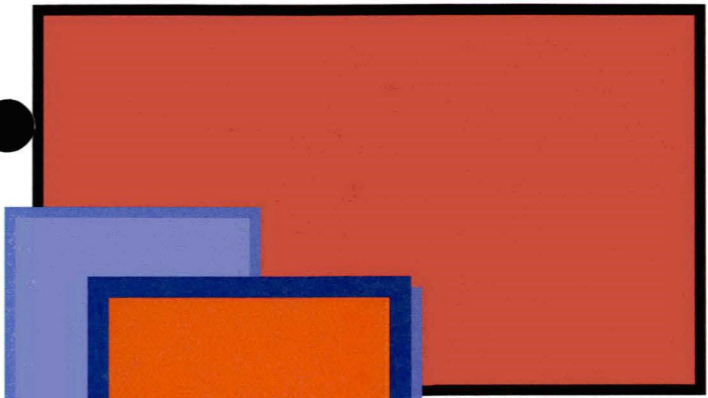
For questions about VA educational benefits, or to speak to an education case manager, call 1-888-GI Bill ®1 (1-888-442-4551) (toll free) Monday through Friday during normal business hours.

Log on to the website <http://www.gibill.va.gov> for information about the following topics:

- *Information on various benefit programs*
- *Your own benefits account if you are receiving Montgomery GI Bill® benefits*
- *Verifying monthly enrollments to receive payments*

The VA website also provides links to the following information:

- *Licensing and certification page*
- *Education benefit payment rates*
- *VA forms*
- *Online applications*
- *Transition assistance information*
- *Regulations and policy information*
- *Education news*



**North Dakota
State
Approving
Agency**



State Approving Agency

725 Basin Avenue, Suite 6

Bismarck, ND 58504

Telephone:

701-328-5445

Website:

<http://www.ndus.edu>

Helpful Numbers and Addresses

North Dakota Veterans Affair
Telephone: 701-239-7165
Toll-free: 1-800-634-8387
Website: www.nd.gov/veterans

Other VA Benefit Inquires
Toll-free: 1-800-827-1000
Website: www.vba.va.gov

VA Regional Office
PO Box 66830
St Louis, MO 63166-6830

Fargo Vet Center
3310 Flechtner Drive, Suite 100
Fargo ND 58103
Telephone: 701-237-0942
Fax: 701-237-5734

Veterans Benefits Administration -
Central Area Office
Fargo Regional Office
2101 Elm Street
Fargo ND 58102-2417
Telephone: 701-451-4600

U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Apprenticeship
Barry Dutton, State Director
Telephone: 701-250-4700
Fax: 701-250-4703

GI Bill Education Benefit
Toll-free: 1-888-442-4551
Website: www.gibill.va.gov

VA Benefit Direct Deposit
Toll-free: 1-877-838-2778

Bismarck Vet Center
619 Riverwood Drive, Suite 105
Bismarck ND 58705
Telephone: 701-224-9751 or 224-9752
Fax: 701-223-5150

Minot Vet Center
1400 20th Avenue SW, Suite 2
Minot ND 58701
Telephone: 701-852-0177
Fax: 701-852-5225

Job Service of North Dakota
Veteran Representatives

Bismarck: Joe Hall
Telephone: 701-328-5048

Fargo: Brad Aune
Telephone: 701-239-7338

Minot: Susan OGurek
Telephone: 701-857-7523

Grand Forks: Roy Fillion
Telephone: 701-795-3788
Grand Forks: Andrew Nathan
Telephone: 701-795-3741

Applying for Reimbursement

Step 1. Apply for education benefits. You can complete and submit your application online. Go to www.gibill.va.gov. Select “Education Benefits” then click on “How to Apply for Benefits.” If you’ve previously applied for education benefits, you don’t need to apply again. Go to step 2.

Step 2. Apply for reimbursement. Send a signed and dated request with the following information:

- √ Name, Address, Phone Number, and Social Security Number (or VA file number).
- √ The name of the test you took and the date you took it.
- √ A copy of the test result (whether or not you passed it) or a copy of your license or certification if you have them.
- √ The name and address of the organization issuing the license or certification (not necessarily the organization that administered the test).
- √ The cost of each test. (*Note: registration fees, preparation guides, processing fees, Etc., will not be reimbursed.*)
- √ This statement “*I AUTHORIZE THE RELEASE OF MY TEST INFORMATION TO VA.*”
- √ Your signature and date signed. (*IMPORTANT: Your claim cannot be processed without your signature.*)

You must give this information for each test taken.

Test Approval

To find out which tests are approved contact the North Dakota State Approving Agency or search the G.I. Bill® website for specific test approval information. If you can’t find your test on the website, you should still apply for education benefits. If the test is not listed, it doesn’t mean that it is not a valid test. It only means that it has not yet been approved or it has only recently been approved and has not been put on the list.

How Much Can I Receive?

You can receive reimbursement of up to \$2,000 per test, but not more than the approved cost of the test. You may receive benefits to **retake** a test you didn’t pass (except for Chapter 33). You may receive benefits to retake a test you passed if the test is required for recertification or to allow you to retain a license you may already have.

You must be eligible for benefits in order to receive test reimbursement. Your total months of benefits will be reduced each time you receive reimbursement for a licensing or certification test.

What is the G.I. Bill?

On June 22, 1944, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed into law one of the most significant pieces of legislation ever produced by the United States government: The Servicemembers’ Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the G.I. Bill of Rights. By the time the original G.I. Bill® ended in July 1956, 7.8 million World War II veterans had participated in an education or training program. Today, the legacy of the original G.I. Bill® lives on in the Montgomery G.I. Bill.®

STATE APPROVING AGENCY

The State Approving Agency originated when the G.I. Bill of Rights was signed into law in 1944 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Congress recognized that each state has the right and responsibility for the education and training of its residents. The State Approving Agency together with the federal government manages veterans education benefits.

The State Approving Agency’s (SAA) role is to approve and supervise the programs of education and training for eligible veterans, dependents, National Guard members, and reservists. The North Dakota State Approving Agency operates within the North Dakota University System.

The SAA must specifically approve each program of education or training in which a veteran or eligible person wishes to use G.I. Bill® benefits.

Post-9/11 GI Bill®—Chapter 33

A new GI Bill ®for individuals who served on active duty on or after September 11, 2011.

- * Effective August 1, 2009
- * Provisions include tuition and fees, basic housing allowance, a stipend for books and supplies
- * Benefits prorated based on the number of months of active duty since 9/11/2001 and the training time attending classes
- * Veterans eligible for Chapters 30, 1606, or 1607 may elect Chapter 33 benefits
- * Transferability of benefits to spouses and dependent children possible within DoD policy and procedures (TBP)
- * Some service and classes are excluded
- * Refer to www.gibill.va.gov for details

Veteran’s Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) Chapter 32

Provides up to 36 months of education benefits to eligible veterans who paid into VEAP while they were in the service.

- * Eligibility dependent upon dates of enlistment and contribution to VEAP
- * Service after September 11, 2001 may qualify for Chapter 33
- * Refer to www.gibill.va.gov for details

Dependents Education Assistance (DEA) Chapter 35

Provides up to 45 months for eligible spouses and children of certain veterans.

- * Veteran died or is permanently and totally disabled as a result of a service connected Disability
- * Veteran died of any cause while a service connected disability was in effect
- * Service member missing, captured, detained, or interned under certain circumstances
- * VA establishes eligibility for 10 or 20 years benefit periods

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services Chapter 31

Education services and benefits for veterans with a 10% or greater service connected disability who require transition assistance to civilian life and employment.

Licensing & Certification Test Reimbursement for Veterans

Veterans and Eligible Individuals—Use Your G.I. Bill® for Licensing and Certification Tests

Having A License Or Certification Can Open Doors For You To Today’s Workplace.

*Many professions require a **license** or **certification**. **Licensing tests** are required by state or other government regulations. **Certification Tests** are voluntary, generally accepted credentials that can help you obtain, keep, or advance in a job. Certification tests are specific tests taken for a field of employment, not a certificate you receive for training.*

This G.I. Bill ® benefit reimburses the eligible veteran or dependent under Chapters 30, 32, 33 or 35 for an approved licensing or certification test taken on or after March 1, 2001. Chapter 1606 and Chapter 1607 are reimbursed for tests taken after January 6, 2006. Licensing & Certification programs are payable under the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill®; however the housing allowance is not payable.

Veterans, Dependents, Members of the National Guard, and Reservists

Have You Considered Using Your G.I. Bill Benefits for: On-the-Job Training or Apprenticeship Programs

You may be eligible to receive a monthly G.I. Bill benefit check from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA).

What is On-the-Job Training?

On-the-Job Training (OJT) is training you receive while actually performing a job and earning wages, as well as receiving your G.I. Bill benefits. OJT programs normally range from six months to two years in length. Some examples of OJT are: Welder, Painter, Cook, Pressman, and Auto Mechanic.

What is Apprenticeship Training?

Apprenticeship Training is on-the-job training coupled with theoretical related instruction. You receive your G.I. Bill benefits while working full time and earning wages. Apprenticeship programs are normally from two to five years in length. Registration with the North Dakota Office of Apprenticeship is not mandatory for veterans benefits; however, it is recommended in order for the veteran to receive journeyman's papers upon successful completion. Some examples of currently approved apprenticeship programs are: Carpenter, Electrician, Brick Layer, Asbestos Worker, Plumber, Iron Worker, Corrections Officer, Machinist, and Maintenance Mechanic.

The jobs listed above are only a sample of the many jobs that can be approved for veterans benefits.

Time Limits

Active Duty (Chapter 30) veterans have ten (10) years from release from last period of active duty.

Post 9-11 (Chapter 33) veterans have fifteen (15) years from release from last period of active duty.

Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606) Effective June 30, 2008, members of the Selected Reserve with remaining Chapter 1606 entitlement will have eligibility until the date they separate from the Reserve.

REAP (Chapter 1607) No time limit as long as individual remains in the same level of the Ready Reserve from which called to active duty.

How to Begin

1. If you do not have a job, or if you are not working in the occupation you want contact your local Job Service . The Veteran's Employment Representative should be able to find an employer who can offer the kind of training you need to reach your occupational goal.
2. Next, either you or your employer should contact the North Dakota State Approving Agency so that the necessary steps can be taken to approve the training program. Keep in mind that not all occupations can be approved. Please contact the North Dakota State Approving Agency for more information.
3. Contact the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to determine your eligibility and to obtain the necessary application forms.

Benefits To Employers

- ★ Veterans who have worked in technically oriented military occupations are better prepared for civilian technical training.
- ★ Veterans who have demonstrated the aptitude to be trained in a structured environment.
- ★ Veterans who have developed a work ethic that enables them to report for work on time and in the proper frame of mind.
- ★ Veterans tend to be more mature, self-confident, and drug-free employees.
- ★ Veterans who receive G.I. Bill assistance will work toward a training objective and make satisfactory progress to receive continued benefits.
- ★ Veterans possess higher education and training achievements.
- ★ Veterans receive the same prevailing wage as other employees in the same position. Scheduled pay increases develop employee loyalty.
- ★ Veterans possess work traits such as adapting to physical demands, following safety guidelines, working under pressure, and setting priorities.

Employer record-keeping is minimal.



Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (DEA)

The following information is to provide information to High School Administrators, Counselors, Parents, and Students regarding the **G.I. Bill**® and the benefits available for education and training. Students in either a **Public** High School or **Private** High School may already be **eligible for G.I. Bill benefits** as an **eligible dependent** if a parent is a veteran and meets certain criteria as explained in this brochure and if the student is **18 years of age**.

Counselors and parents can guide students by being informed of the educational and training opportunities available as a result of serving with our country's Armed Forces.

The DEA, also known as Chapter 35 of Title 38, U.S. Code, provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of certain veterans. To be eligible, you must be a son, daughter, or spouse of a

- * veteran who died or is permanently and totally disabled as the result of a service-connected disability. The disability must arise out of active service in the armed forces;
- * veteran who died from any cause while such service-connected disability was in existence;
- * service member who is missing in action or is captured in line of duty by a hostile force;
- * service member who is currently being forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power;
- * service member who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient treatment for a service connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability. This change is effective December 23, 2006.

How To Apply For Benefits

First, find out whether your school is approved for VA benefits—check with the school's administration or counselor. If the school has not requested approval before, ask an official to contact the North Dakota State Approving Agency to obtain approval.

North Dakota State Approving Agency
701-328-5445
E-mail: Rhonda.Schauer@ndus.edu

Second, complete the application (VA Form 22-5490) Application for Survivor's and Dependents' Educational Assistance) and submit it to the appropriate U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) regional office. You can obtain this form by going to www.gibill.va.gov, click on *Education Forms* and download the form or click on *Ask a Question* and request the form be sent to you.

Third, the school must certify your enrollment to the VA. See your Guidance Counselor for assistance.

How Much Educational Assistance Will You Receive?

You can always find the current rates at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/rates-index.asp>

As a son or daughter, as long as you have entitlement left, you may Generally receive benefits under this program from age 18-26 (8 years).

You may be entitled to receive up to 45 months of education benefits.

Montgomery GI Bill®—Active Duty Chapter 30

Provides up to 36 months of education benefits to eligible veterans if you:

- * Entered active duty after June 30, 1985
- * Have a high school diploma or GED
- * Contributed \$1200 in first enlistment
- * Continuously served for 2 or 3 years depending on enlistment contract
- * Received an honorable discharge

Typically you have 10 years from date of discharge to use your MGIB benefits.

Montgomery GI Bill®—Selected Reserves Chapter 1606

Provides up to 36 months of benefits to members of the Selected Reserve

- * Does not require active duty to qualify
- * After June 30, 1985 incurred a six-year obligation and completed IADT
- * Have a high school diploma or GED
- * Are in good standing in a drilling unit
- * Typically, eligibility ends when you leave the Selected Reserves
- * Benefits generally end when separated from the Selected Reserve

Reserve Educational Assistance program Chapter 1607

Provides up to 36 months of education benefits to members of the Selected Reserve and Individual Ready Reserve who were called or ordered to Title 10 active duty in response to war or a national emergency.

- * Must have served at least 90 consecutive days under a contingency operation
- * Pays benefit based on the number of continuous days on active duty as a percentage of the MGIB-AD
- * Benefit generally ends when separated from the Selected Reserves unless entire Service contract is completed
- * Service in Sec 502 (f) Title 32 eligible
- * NDAA 2008 expanded benefits
- * Refer to www.gibill.va.gov for details

North Dakota State Approving Agency – Federal GI Bill
Bismarck, North Dakota

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HB1025

2/4/15

FACT SHEET

Overview

Fifty-five State Approving Agencies (SAA) approve programs for the GI Bill, including educational and non-college degree programs, e.g. CDL truck driving school, Flight Schools, as well as apprenticeship/OJT (App/OJT) programs.

Mission Statement

- To assist the VA in preventing waste, fraud and abuse in the administration of the GI Bill
- To provide quality assurance for the veterans' education and accountability for the taxpayers' investments
- To ensure greater educational and training opportunities to meet the changing needs of veterans
- To promote and safeguard quality education and training programs for persons eligible for the GI Bill

Primary Tasks and Goals

1. Approval of Programs: Evaluate compliance with federal regulations and take action on education and training programs seeking approval for GI Bill education benefits.
2. Compliance Survey Visits: Review the enrollment of persons eligible for the GI Bill in approved programs and verify payments by the VA to the schools, training establishments and GI Bill beneficiaries. Surveys are conducted to prevent deficiencies, and identify and correct compliance issues. FY15 Contract: 20 surveys are to be conducted by the SAA.
3. Other School Visits: The SAA conducts inspection visits to new schools and training facilities applying for program approval and technical assistance visits to schools currently approved, if needed.
4. Technical Assistance: Provide assistance to school certifying officials (SCO), eligible persons, et al, regarding approval criteria, certification of enrollment, facility or program issues and facilitation of benefits delivery.
5. Liaison & Outreach: Interact with the VA, other governmental agencies, schools, persons eligible for the GI Bill and professional organizations regarding the GI Bill.
6. Contract Compliance: Prepare and submit the SAA reimbursement contract, invoices and reports (e.g., quarterly report, Local Veteran Employment Representatives report, annual business plan and self-evaluation) to the VA. The VA contract funds one Director position. FY15 funding allocation is \$100,000.

Economic Impact - Federal GI Bill Benefits Paid to North Dakota Veterans and Dependents:

Programs	FFY13	FFY14
Chapter 30, Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB)	1.2 Million	1.1 Million
Chapter 33, Post-9/11 GI Bill	16.9 Million	19 Million
Chapter 1607 (REAP) & Chapter 1606 (Select Reserves) - Combined	2 Million	1.7 Million

(source: USDVA Education Services)

Testimonial HB 1025
House Appropriations Committee
February 4, 2015, 2:30 pm

#5 HB 1025
2/4/15

Good Afternoon Chairman Pollert and members of the committee.

I'm David A. Johnson the Adjutant for the North Dakota Department of The American Legion. I represent the American Legion as a member of the North Dakota Veterans Coordinating Council. I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on House Bill 1025 regarding the ND Department of Veterans Affairs budget requests. As a member of the ND Veterans Coordinating Council and the American Legion, I am here to reinforce their position as speaking as one consolidated Veterans group. I wish to testify on two items of the ND Department of Veterans Affairs request.

The first item is the funding of the Post War Trust Fund. We are all well aware of the past performance of the market place and the returns on investments that have been realized or lost over the past several years. The volatility of the financial markets has made it very difficult for any real return on anyone's portfolio, especially if we are counting on Municipal Bonds, CD's or even Money Market Mutual Funds for those returns. This market volatility in interest income creates instability for the ND Veterans Home to provide a reasonable budget or estimate of funds that are sourced from the PWTF from year to year. The PWTF is a dedicated and restricted reserve fund; the transfer of cash asset from the General or the Legacy Fund to the PWTF is a balance sheet adjustment. It is neither lost, nor the expended new dollars. Simply transferring money from one reserve fund account to another reserve fund account which allows the interest income earned to assist the Veterans Homes Operating Budget to be more consistent from year to year. Consistency is crucial to provide a stable, quality of life for the residence of the Veterans Home.

The second item is in regards to their request for Legislative funding to assist three North Dakota patriotic organizations in their continued effort to support the needs of ND Veterans to register and file claims through the VA Regional Medical System in North Dakota. The American Legion is one of these three organizations; the other two are the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans. All three of these organizations have staff Service Officers at the VA Regional Medical Center in Fargo. Salaries of these positions are paid through the organization's dues structure. Our members are typically on limited fixed incomes and the small amount of money the annual dues cost them, does have an impact on their daily lives.

I will speak from the American Legions perspective, but I am confident that the issues that are affecting our organizations ability to support our Service Officer also affect the other organizations as well. As times have changed, so have the total membership of these organizations.

In 1975, the American Legions Membership was over 35,000, an all-time high. Membership was strong and our finances were stable. We easily could fund the Department Service Officer position. Those memberships were still primarily made up World War II Veterans. World War II created 15 million veterans across the country. Today, our membership is down to 16,000 veterans, and 74.41% of the American Legions veterans come from World War II, Korea and Vietnam. That's 11,900 veterans over the age of 60 in the American Legion's organization who may need our help. The available pool of potential membership is dwindling quickly. What difference does this make? The number of veterans is decreasing, but the care necessary and the number of cases for today's veterans is much different from previous war-time periods. The ugly fact is that in the past, a greater number of veterans died in the field from the wounds they sustained. Today's level of immediate combat care is much improved and has increased the number of surviving wounded soldiers. Traumatic Brain Injury, TBI is a new injury. Previous combat situations did not have the capability to provide the care necessary to survive brain injury. Most injuries resulted in death in the field or at a mobile combat hospital. Today, these injured soldiers are immediately removed from the field and evacuated to a medical center and bound for Germany's Medical facilities often receiving surgical situations aboard the aircraft. What does this mean to the ND VA Medical System and the Service Officers?

The level of claims expertise is greater at the VA than at the CVSO level because they serve a broader base of veterans therefore have a greater level of experience. Veteran Service Officers and County Veterans Service Officers can provide the same level of service because each portal to the VA system is the same be it a CVSO, ND DVA Staff Officer or a Service Organization such as the American Legion. A part-time CVSO may not have the experience necessary to provide adequate information to their Veterans; therefore they consistently contact the Veteran Organization Service Officers located at the VA for assistance.

The ND Department of Veteran Affairs has two processing service officers whom do the same function as our three organizations. The CVSO's, The NDDVA Claims Officers are all paid for by tax dollars, the three service organizations pay the salaries with dues and have been for nearly fifty years. As a result, the declining membership impacts our ability to continue down this fiscal path. If we are unable to sustain these positions, the projected claim load will fall to the NDDVA Officers and eventually the ND DVA will need to add multiple FTE's to sustain the claims load we are experiencing today.

The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans are asking for the Legislature assistance just as any other industry that needs governmental support has and will do in the future. The business of the North Dakota Veterans Health Care and Benefits is a huge industry in our state. Not even addressing the employment aspect of the VA Health Care System, but just the dollars that effect and impact our state's economy is staggering. I've included in this testimony Fiscal Year 2013 Summary of VA Expenditures in North Dakota by County. On page two, you will see the totals of the various categories of VA expenditures. Two

of these are significant. First, is the Medical Care expenditures, \$149,518,000 dollars, another column; Compensation and Benefits also significant at \$149,596,000 dollars. This is nearly \$300 million dollars of the \$334,755,000 coming into the state. The \$150,000,000 in Compensation and Benefits is disposable dollars in our economy, food, housing, mortgages, clothing and any other items the veterans are buying to make their lives more comfortable. Imagine the \$150 million as it grows three to four times due to the multiplier effect as dollars sifts through each of our communities.

The American Legion, the Veteran of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans are asking for your help. Help us to continue to work for veteran face to face every day, help us make the veterans and their families lives better and to make the communities in which they live more sustainable.

On behalf of The North Dakota Veterans Coordinating Council and the American Legion, we ask that you include the funding for the Department Service Officers in the ND DVA Budget. Your "Do Pass" will help us continue to take care of the North Dakota Veteran's needs.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

David A. Johnson
ND Dept. of The American Legion
Dept. Adjutant

FY13 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF VA EXPENDITURES (GDX)

FY13 Summary of Expenditures by State										
Expenditures in \$000s										
County/ Congressional District	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Compensation & Pension	Construction	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	Loan Guaranty#	General Operating Expenses	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care	Unique Patients**
ADAMS	204	\$ 1,163	\$ 553	\$ -	\$ 40	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20	\$ 550	78
BARNES	925	\$ 5,842	\$ 2,389	\$ -	\$ 163	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 78	\$ 3,212	367
BENSON	403	\$ 2,698	\$ 1,191	\$ -	\$ 128	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30	\$ 1,350	111
BILLINGS	121	\$ 167	\$ 72	\$ -	\$ 9	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 86	23
BOTTINEAU	643	\$ 2,617	\$ 1,437	\$ -	\$ 205	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10	\$ 966	195
BOWMAN	221	\$ 945	\$ 445	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 43	\$ 457	101
BURKE	209	\$ 728	\$ 402	\$ -	\$ 19	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 306	57
BURLEIGH	7,038	\$ 28,836	\$ 15,944	\$ -	\$ 1,999	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 363	\$ 10,531	2,043
CASS	10,444	\$ 104,180	\$ 32,784	\$ 2,623	\$ 5,894	\$ -	\$ 6,479	\$ 1,019	\$ 55,381	4,281
CAVALIER	368	\$ 1,414	\$ 648	\$ -	\$ 29	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 42	\$ 695	116
DICKEY	487	\$ 1,571	\$ 890	\$ -	\$ 73	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 34	\$ 575	114
DIVIDE	231	\$ 763	\$ 326	\$ -	\$ 46	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 59	\$ 332	60
DUNN	327	\$ 1,456	\$ 653	\$ -	\$ 20	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 15	\$ 767	110
EDDY	188	\$ 902	\$ 555	\$ -	\$ 17	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 330	56
EMMONS	317	\$ 1,579	\$ 874	\$ -	\$ 20	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 685	141
FOSTER	222	\$ 921	\$ 482	\$ -	\$ 58	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4	\$ 377	68
GOLDEN VALLEY	168	\$ 443	\$ 180	\$ -	\$ 20	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18	\$ 225	44
GRAND FORKS	6,089	\$ 32,502	\$ 16,058	\$ -	\$ 5,040	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 288	\$ 11,116	1,681
GRANT	235	\$ 852	\$ 418	\$ -	\$ 41	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 68	\$ 325	65
GRIGGS	208	\$ 1,667	\$ 824	\$ -	\$ 13	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 21	\$ 809	108
HETTINGER	273	\$ 1,020	\$ 553	\$ -	\$ 19	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 447	78
KIDDER	205	\$ 1,220	\$ 510	\$ -	\$ 15	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 91	\$ 605	76
LA MOURE	341	\$ 1,428	\$ 542	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2	\$ 859	110
LOGAN	134	\$ 935	\$ 439	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10	\$ 486	76
MCHENRY	575	\$ 2,360	\$ 1,589	\$ -	\$ 86	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3	\$ 682	155
MCINTOSH	213	\$ 1,173	\$ 548	\$ -	\$ 56	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 31	\$ 537	98
MCKENZIE	507	\$ 2,193	\$ 1,185	\$ -	\$ 30	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9	\$ 970	175
MCLEAN	863	\$ 4,658	\$ 2,368	\$ -	\$ 80	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 19	\$ 2,191	295
MERCER	725	\$ 2,184	\$ 1,345	\$ -	\$ 42	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 47	\$ 751	185
MORTON	2,076	\$ 12,064	\$ 6,492	\$ -	\$ 526	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50	\$ 4,996	744
MOUNTRAIL	564	\$ 3,022	\$ 1,767	\$ -	\$ 76	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 33	\$ 1,147	184
NELSON	355	\$ 2,461	\$ 1,369	\$ -	\$ 62	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 1,029	149
OLIVER	144	\$ 536	\$ 331	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3	\$ 202	52
PEMBINA	705	\$ 3,210	\$ 1,704	\$ -	\$ 183	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11	\$ 1,312	248
PIERCE	398	\$ 1,336	\$ 655	\$ -	\$ 90	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 17	\$ 574	117
RAMSEY	810	\$ 5,721	\$ 2,734	\$ -	\$ 264	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 99	\$ 2,625	324
RANSOM	497	\$ 4,290	\$ 1,704	\$ -	\$ 30	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 54	\$ 2,502	225
RENVILLE	332	\$ 1,005	\$ 739	\$ -	\$ 69	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4	\$ 193	68
RICHLAND	1,047	\$ 7,229	\$ 2,761	\$ -	\$ 370	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18	\$ 4,079	381
ROLETTE	741	\$ 4,934	\$ 2,934	\$ -	\$ 81	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 63	\$ 1,855	191

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FY13 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF VA EXPENDITURES (GDX)

FY13 Summary of Expenditures by State Expenditures in \$000s										
County/ Congressional District	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Compensation & Pension	Construction	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	Loan Guaranty#	General Operating Expenses	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care	Unique Patients**
SARGENT	321	\$ 1,810	\$ 820	\$ -	\$ 99	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 890	106
SHERIDAN	148	\$ 393	\$ 200	\$ -	\$ 19	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 173	47
SIoux	338	\$ 1,693	\$ 931	\$ -	\$ 53	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 709	72
SLOPE	46	\$ 189	\$ 19	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ 166	21
STARK	1,993	\$ 10,580	\$ 5,071	\$ -	\$ 402	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 210	\$ 4,897	780
STEELE	216	\$ 1,364	\$ 715	\$ -	\$ 27	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 239	\$ 384	70
STUTSMAN	1,731	\$ 10,892	\$ 4,642	\$ -	\$ 330	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 65	\$ 5,855	593
TOWNER	241	\$ 1,043	\$ 434	\$ -	\$ 21	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30	\$ 558	89
TRAILL	724	\$ 5,406	\$ 2,190	\$ -	\$ 309	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 64	\$ 2,842	266
WALSH	1,027	\$ 5,119	\$ 2,071	\$ -	\$ 74	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 83	\$ 2,892	327
WARD	6,521	\$ 31,146	\$ 18,296	\$ -	\$ 5,347	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 262	\$ 7,241	1,572
WELLS	354	\$ 1,442	\$ 752	\$ -	\$ 19	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 669	106
WILLIAMS	1,998	\$ 9,450	\$ 4,059	\$ -	\$ 132	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 131	\$ 5,128	727
NORTH DAKOTA (Totals)	56,213	\$ 334,755	\$ 149,596	\$ 2,623	\$ 22,770	\$ -	\$ 6,479	\$ 3,770	\$ 149,518	18,526
CONG. DIST (01)	56,213	\$ 334,755	\$ 149,596	\$ 2,623	\$ 22,770	\$ -	\$ 6,479	\$ 3,770	\$ 149,518	18,526
NORTH DAKOTA (Totals)	56,213	\$ 334,755	\$ 149,596	\$ 2,623	\$ 22,770	\$ -	\$ 6,479	\$ 3,770	\$ 149,518	18,526
Notes:										
* Veteran population estimates, as of September 30, 2013, are produced by the VA Office of the Actuary (VetPop 2011).										
# Prior to FY 08, "Loan Guaranty" expenditures were included in the Education & Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (E&VRE) programs. Currently, all "Loan Guaranty" expenditures are attributed to Travis County, TX, where all Loan Guaranty payments are processed. VA will continue to improve data collection for future GDX reports to better distribute loan expenditures at the state, county and congressional district levels.										
** Unique patients are patients who received treatment at a VA health care facility. Data are provided by the Allocation Resource Center (ARC).										
Expenditure data sources: USASpending.gov for Compensation & Pension (C&P) and Education and Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (EVRE) Benefits; Veterans Benefits Administration Insurance Center for the Insurance costs; the VA Financial Management System (FMS) for Construction, Medical Research, General Operating Expenses, and certain C&P and Readjustment data; and the Allocation Resource Center (ARC) for Medical Care costs.										
1. Expenditures are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars. For example, \$500 to \$1,000 are rounded to \$1; \$0 to \$499 are rounded to \$0; and "\$ -" = 0 or no expenditures.										
2. The Compensation & Pension expenditures include dollars for the following programs: veterans' compensation for service-connected disabilities; dependency and indemnity compensation for service-connected deaths; veterans' pension for nonservice-connected disabilities; and burial and other benefits to veterans and their survivors.										
3. Medical Care expenditures include dollars for medical services, medical administration, facility maintenance, educational support, research support, and other overhead items. Medical Care expenditures do not include dollars for construction or other non-medical support.										
4. Medical Care expenditures are based on where patients live instead of where care is delivered.										
5. A star symbol (*) in the Unique Patients column denotes that there were less than 10 Unique Patients.										


#6
HB 1025
2/4/15

Chairman Pollert and members of the House Human Resources Appropriations Committee, my name is Jaclyn Hall and I am the Executive Director of Ruth Meiers Hospitality House in Bismarck ND. I am here today to discuss an increasing concern in our agency and agencies across North Dakota – the increase in Homeless Veterans.


In 2013, Ruth Meiers provided 3,709 nights of shelter to 58 Homeless Veterans. In 2014, this number increased substantially to 5,007 nights to 81 Homeless Veterans.

This is an increase in over 40 percent in the number of Veterans in need. In communities such as Grand Forks, 1,908 nights of shelter to 70 homeless Veterans in 2014 and in Minot, over 40 homeless Veterans received services in lieu of a homeless shelter in this community.

Over the last year, Ruth Meiers received funding through the Housing Incentive Fund to add affordable housing to our community. Currently 16 homeless Veterans have transitioned to permanent housing with 12 of these individuals supported through HUD Vash Vouchers. However, this is not enough.



As you consider the budget for the state's Veteran's Affairs office, I ask you to consider these concerns and look at ways to support these individuals. Whether it is additional affordable housing, support for increased reemployment training and the Military Service Center or discretionary funding to provide individualized support for agencies – we need to do all we can to care for those who laid their lives on the line for all of us.



Thank you for giving me the time to speak to you this morning. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Department of Veterans' Affairs - Budget No. 321
House Bill No. 1025
Base Level Funding Changes

	Executive Budget Recommendation				House Version			
	FTE Positions	General Fund	Other Funds	Total	FTE Positions	General Fund	Other Funds	Total
2015-17 Biennium Base Level	8.00	\$1,420,703	\$0	\$1,420,703	8.00	\$1,420,703	\$0	\$1,420,703
2015-17 Ongoing Funding Changes								
Base payroll changes		\$70,244		\$70,244				\$0
Salary increase - Performance		46,133	\$17,237	63,370				0
Salary increase - Market equity		15,111		15,111				0
Salary increase - Targeted equity		55,100		55,100				0
Retirement increase		6,519		6,519				0
Health insurance increase		38,858		38,858				0
Transfers FTE from the North Dakota University System	1.00		275,696	275,696				0
Adjusts funding for operating expenses		(5,220)		(5,220)				0
Increases funding for stand down events		10,000		10,000				0
Adds funding to purchase vans		15,000		15,000				0
Removes funding for Agent Orange grants		(50,000)		(50,000)				0
Removes funding for service dog grants		(50,000)		(50,000)				0
Other change				0				0
Other change				0				0
Other change				0				0
Total ongoing funding changes	1.00	\$151,745	\$292,933	\$444,678	0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
One-time funding items								
Other one-time funding item				0				0
Total one-time funding changes	0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Changes to Base Level Funding	1.00	\$151,745	\$292,933	\$444,678	0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
2015-17 Total Funding	9.00	\$1,572,448	\$292,933	\$1,865,381	8.00	\$1,420,703	\$0	\$1,420,703
Other Sections in House Bill No. 1025								
	Executive Budget Recommendation				House Version			

#1
 HB 1025
 2/12/15

Department of Veterans' Affairs - Budget No. 321
 House Bill No. 1025
 Base Level Funding Changes

	Executive Budget Recommendation				House Version				House Changes to Executive Recommendation			
	FTE Positions	General Fund	Other Funds	Total	FTE Positions	General Fund	Other Funds	Total	FTE Positions	General Fund	Other Funds	Total
2015-17 Biennium Base Level	8.00	\$1,420,703	\$0	\$1,420,703	8.00	\$1,420,703	\$0	\$1,420,703	0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
2015-17 Ongoing Funding Changes												
Base payroll changes		\$70,244		\$70,244		\$70,244		\$70,244				\$0
Salary increase - Performance		46,133	\$17,237	63,370		38,613	8,757	47,370		(7,520)	(8,480)	(16,000)
Salary increase - Market equity		15,111		15,111				0		(15,111)		(15,111)
Salary increase - Targeted equity		55,100		55,100				0		(55,100)		(55,100)
Retirement increase		6,519		6,519				0		(6,519)		(6,519)
Health insurance increase		38,858		38,858		38,858		38,858				0
Transfers FTE from the North Dakota University System	1.00		275,696	275,696	1.00		275,696	275,696				0
Adjusts funding for operating expenses		(5,220)		(5,220)		(5,220)		(5,220)				0
Increases funding for stand down events		10,000		10,000		5,000		5,000		(5,000)		(5,000)
Adds funding to purchase vans		15,000		15,000		15,000		15,000				0
Removes funding for Agent Orange grants		(50,000)		(50,000)		(50,000)		(50,000)				0
Removes funding for service dog grants		(50,000)		(50,000)		(50,000)		(50,000)				0
Other change				0				0				0
Other change				0				0				0
Other change				0				0				0
Total ongoing funding changes	1.00	\$151,745	\$292,933	\$444,678	1.00	\$62,495	\$284,453	\$346,948	0.00	(\$89,250)	(\$8,480)	(\$97,730)
One-time funding items				0				0				0
Other one-time funding item				0				0				0
Total one-time funding changes	0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Changes to Base Level Funding	1.00	\$151,745	\$292,933	\$444,678	1.00	\$62,495	\$284,453	\$346,948	0.00	(\$89,250)	(\$8,480)	(\$97,730)
2015-17 Total Funding	9.00	\$1,572,448	\$292,933	\$1,865,381	9.00	\$1,483,198	\$284,453	\$1,767,651	0.00	(\$89,250)	(\$8,480)	(\$97,730)

Other Sections in House Bill No. 1025

Executive Budget Recommendation	House Version
---------------------------------	---------------

HB# 1025 #2
2/12/15

15.8133.01001
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for
House Appropriations - Human Resources
Division Committee

Fiscal No. 1

February 16, 2015

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1025

Page 1, replace lines 12 through 18 with:

"Veterans' affairs	\$1,410,580	\$342,071	\$1,752,651
Transport vans	0	15,000	15,000
Accrued leave payments	<u>10,123</u>	<u>(10,123)</u>	<u>0</u>
Total all funds	\$1,420,703	\$346,948	\$1,767,651
Less estimated income	<u>0</u>	<u>284,453</u>	<u>284,453</u>
Total general fund	\$1,420,703	\$62,495	\$1,483,198
Full-time equivalent positions	8.00	1.00	9.00"

Renumber accordingly

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT:

House Bill No. 1025 - Department of Veterans' Affairs - House Action

	Base Budget	House Changes	House Version
Veterans' Affairs	\$1,410,580	\$342,071	\$1,752,651
Accrued leave payments	10,123	(10,123)	
Transport Vans		15,000	15,000
Total all funds	\$1,420,703	\$346,948	\$1,767,651
Less estimated income	<u>0</u>	<u>284,453</u>	<u>284,453</u>
General fund	\$1,420,703	\$62,495	\$1,483,198
FTE	8.00	1.00	9.00

Department No. 321 - Department of Veterans' Affairs - Detail of House Changes

	Adds Funding for Base Payroll Changes ¹	Adds Funding for Salary and Benefit Increases ²	Transfers State Approving Agency ³	Adjusts Operating Expenses ⁴	Increases Funding for Stand Downs ⁵	Adds Funding to Purchase Vans ⁶
Veterans' Affairs	\$80,367	\$86,228	\$275,696	(\$5,220)	\$5,000	
Accrued leave payments	(10,123)					
Transport Vans						15,000
Total all funds	\$70,244	\$86,228	\$275,696	(\$5,220)	\$5,000	\$15,000
Less estimated income	<u>0</u>	<u>8,757</u>	<u>275,696</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
General fund	\$70,244	\$77,471	\$0	(\$5,220)	\$5,000	\$15,000
FTE	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

	Removes Grants ⁷	Total House Changes
Veterans' Affairs	(\$100,000)	\$342,071
Accrued leave payments		(10,123)
Transport Vans		15,000
Total all funds	(\$100,000)	\$346,948
Less estimated income	<u>0</u>	<u>284,453</u>
General fund	(\$100,000)	\$62,495
FTE	0.00	1.00

¹ Funding is added for cost-to-continue 2013-15 biennium salaries and benefit increases and for other base payroll changes.

² The following funding is added for 2015-17 biennium performance salary adjustments of 2 to 4 percent per year and increases in monthly health insurance premiums:

	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total</u>
Salary increase - Performance	\$38,613	\$8,757	\$47,370
Health insurance increase	38,858		38,858
Total	\$77,471	\$8,757	86,228

³ Federal funding for the state approving agency and 1 FTE position is transferred from the North Dakota University System.

⁴ Funding for operating expenses is adjusted.

⁵ Funding for stand down events is increased to provide a total of \$20,000.

⁶ Funding is added to purchase vans to transport veterans to medical appointments.

⁷ Funding for the following grants authorized during the 2013-15 biennium is removed:

	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total</u>
Agent orange	(\$50,000)		(\$50,000)
Service dogs	(50,000)		(50,000)
Total	(\$100,000)		(\$100,000)

Testimony on HB 1025
House Appropriations Committee
Department of Veterans Affairs
March 11, 2015

3-11-15
1
HB 1025

Chairman's Holmberg and Committee Members:

Our 2015-17 Biennium Appropriation includes the transfer of the State Approving Agency (SSA) from Higher Education to Veterans Affairs. This will improve education services to veterans and their dependents throughout the State since we will be able to use department resources in reaching out to veterans. The SSA is funded with federal dollars and those funds will be accessed through our agency. The funding level is presently at \$275,696 and will add one full-time FTE to our agency.

The Governor's executive budget recognized the problem our agency has been experiencing in staff turnover and included funding for salary adjustments for market equity (\$55,100). In the last two years, we have had four staff people leave for other opportunities. Considering our staff total is eight, this is a big turnover for a small agency. In one position alone, three people have resigned from the highly specialized position. Unfortunately the House removed this funding. This is clearly an issue that needs addressing.

One-time funding projects for 2013-2015 biennium:

Website Upgrade – ITD should have the work as assigned completed by the end of the biennium. As of January 2015, \$14,667.60 has been spent with \$8,265.80 remaining. This represents one-time funding \$15,000 for this biennium and \$7,933.40 from carryover funds from 2011-2013 biennium.

Transportation Vans – The \$30,000 funding has been spent for two vans this biennium. We are waiting for delivery of the second van which should be here in April.

Agent Orange Grants - As of July 2014, the remaining \$20,553.46 of the \$50,000 funding had been given out as a grant to the Vietnam Veterans of America.

Service Dog Training - \$50,000 had been allocated to assist veterans diagnosed with PTSD to receive a service dog. One dog has been placed with a veteran at a cost of \$12,500. Remaining funds of \$37,500 will enable three more veterans to each receive a service dog. We hope this will be accomplished by the end of the biennium.

\$250,000 was transferred to the Post War Trust Fund at the start of this biennium.

1-1

Commission Wangen will be talking on the optional packages we would like this committee to consider along with any changes to the executive recommendation.

Thank you

Cathy Halgunseth
Executive Assistant
ND DVA

Chairman Holmberg and Committee Members:

2015-2017 Requested Budget Changes:

Restore Base Budget Funding

*To restore base budget funding to maintain operating levels for the 2015-2017 biennium. Costs increases in travel impact the agency's ability to participate and attend Outreach events throughout the State, as well as conduct CVSO training. Supplies - IT Software and IT Equipment under **\$5,000** funds will continue our ability to stay current with technology changes and the agency's replacement schedule as recommended by ITD. Supplies - IT Software also includes vendor agreements covering our Claims and Loan Program software programs. These agreements cover support, maintenance, upgrades and off-site backups of these important programs. IT Contractual Services covers ongoing costs for transfers of DD214s from our VetraSpec software system (handles VA claims documents) to the State's Filenet system. This cost would be **\$47,846**.*

(1) **Increase to the Post War Trust Fund – One time**

The funding available for service to benefits from the PWTF is not enough to fully fund all programs and properly care for our veteran's. In the interest of caring for our veterans of today and ensuring we can provide for the un-met needs of our veterans in the future we have determined that an additional \$2,000,000 in principal is needed. This principal amount will never be spent-only invested so the interest earnings can be distributed. During the 63rd legislative assembly HB 1468 requested \$2,000,000. \$250,000 was appropriated and added to the principal of the PWTF. Under the direction and advice of the 63rd legislative assembly leadership we are requesting the remaining **\$1,750,000** to our budget.

(2) **Veterans Organizations NSO Office**

Currently the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (NDDVA) acts as the Power of Attorney (POA) for Veteran Service Organizations which cannot support a POA in the state of North Dakota. The North Dakota Chapters of the American Legion and the VFW have indicated that they are no longer financially situated to fund their POA positions at the Fargo VA Regional Office. The VFW has indicated that 60% of this year's entire states budget went to the POA's at the Fargo VA Regional Office, their memberships are down and they foresee, with the trend of the past years, the department will not be capable of funding these positions in the very near future.

The VFW and American Legion POA officers are funded only by their state organizations. The DAV also provides POA services at the Fargo VARO. They are funded by their National organizations, which have shown some concern over funding as well.

During the current biennium the National AMVETS eliminated their POA in North Dakota. The POA was taken over by the NDDVA which increased our workload. If the VFW, DAV and American Legion cannot fund these positions-this could fall on the NDDVA to provide services to these veterans.

To ensure that each organization can continue to fund their POA's at the Fargo VARO we are requesting a \$50,000 per year per organization grant from the NDDVA budget to supplement their operating expenses. This would be \$50,000 x 3 organizations or \$150,000 per year totaling **\$300,000** per biennium.

(3) **State Approving Agency: Included in Governors budget**

The 2015-17 budget includes federal funding in the amount of **\$275,696** for the State Approving Authority (SAA) to move under the Department. The SAA is currently located within Higher Education. The funding includes one FTE position along with operating expenses. We are already working closely with Rhonda Schauer, Director, State Approving Agency, and anticipate a smooth transition. She has already relocated to our Bismarck office and is proving to be an additional resource to the Department in providing services to veterans. This move is supported by the current VA Director, the past two and current Interim Chancellor, the ND SAA Director, and the ND DVA Commissioner. Approximately 24 States have their Department of Veterans Affairs oversee their State Approving Agencies.

(4) **Salary Equity Funding.**

We have had significant turnover in the past year and a half. Since the start of the biennium we have replaced two out of four Veterans Benefits Special positions and one has recently resigned, we also replaced our Financial Programs Manager. All were due to gaining higher compensation. We had four of our top candidates refuse employment due to the compensation package we could offer, this was for just one position we were trying to fill. We have an employee with over 30 years in our agency that is still not at the MPP. In looking at the last legislative session and the target goal to have state employees compensated at 95% of the MPP we would need an additional \$96,143. The Governor recognized the need of our small agency and put in **\$55,100** to start to address this problem.

(5) **Training Position**

In an attempt to meet the demand for training we are proposing **one new FTE** to act as the training officer & benefits specialist. 70% of the training officer's time would be spent attending training, producing training programs, creating training kits and binders and conducting training with CVSO's. This would include complete initial

training for new CVSO's as well as continued training on basic and advanced levels of knowledge for current CVSO's. 30% of the training officer's time would be spent doing hands on work helping veterans obtain benefits such as filing claims, as they will need to be proficient at what they are instructing and changes happen frequently. One of the biggest concerns our CVSO's seem to have revolves around training. We need more staff dedicated to training in order to properly accomplish this objective. Better trained and informed CVSO's will result in much better services to our veterans and their dependents. This will greatly improve the lives of many of our veteran's and their dependents.

An added note: the Federal VA expended over \$334,755,000.00 in 2013 and over \$279,238,000.00 in 2012. That is over half a Billion Dollars in Federal funds coming into North Dakota during the last Biennium. Without VSO's this does not happen. Also this is an increase of over \$55,000,000.00 in just one year. The increase difference between 2012 and 2011 was \$44,000,000.00. Better trained VSO's will be able to improve on this. We are asking for **\$135,575** funding for this position.

(6) **Website Upgrade – One time**

During the last two legislative sessions we asked for our website upgrade that would convert our agency website to Drupal CMS enabling department staff to make content changes to the pages on the website. The website is still hosted by ND ITD and held to the Web Standards in place. During the 2013-15 biennium we needed to have ITD analyze and estimate the cost to finish the website. The project is not completed and an estimated **\$60,935** is needed to complete the website upgrade.

(7) **Temp Employees**

Temporary employee needed to assist NDDVA in collecting data, researching available resources, and contacting stakeholders required to complete projects and programs NDDVA's is working on. Such as Coordination of Mental health providers, Establishing a Veterans Court, establishing help for veterans with barriers to education due to; PTSD, reintegration issues, and TBI; coordinating opportunities for veteran entrepreneurs, employment opportunities, addressing veteran homelessness, transportation to medical services, establishing a Fischer House for the ND Veterans, Website data, healthcare and other benefits available to veterans. We are requesting **\$59,488** for temporary employees.

(8) **Service Dogs for Veterans with PTSD**

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a real illness which greatly affects the quality of lives for well over 35% of our veterans. PTSD is also a large contributing factor in the alarming rate of suicides within our veteran community. Nationally it is estimated that a veteran will successfully commit suicide every 62 minutes which results in over 8,400 suicides per year. In 2012 North Dakota had 18 Veteran Suicides and 25 in 2011. As a comparison we have lost 26 North Dakotans in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001. We have lost over 230 North Dakotan Veterans to

suicide since 2001 (without the 2013 numbers). These service dogs can greatly improve the quality of lives of our veterans who have many hidden injuries from their war experiences. The 63rd legislative assemblies SB 2344 appropriated **\$50,000** to the NDDVA for the purchase of service dogs for our veterans. These funds will be used this biennium and with the number of applications coming in it is easy to see that more help is needed. We would like to continue this appropriation in our budget at **\$100,000**.

(9) **Agent Orange Outreach**

Agent Orange is a highly toxic herbicide used by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War to defoliate hiding places used by the Viet Cong, rice paddies and fields that provided them with food, and to clear the perimeters of military bases to give service members a clear line of fire. Although colorless, it is known as "Agent Orange" because of an orange band painted on the drums used to store and transports it. Over 50 diseases are linked to Agent Orange exposure to include diabetes, Parkinson's, heart diseases, many cancers and birth defects.

North Dakota's 63rd legislative assembly appropriated \$50,000 to NDDVA as grant funding to provide outreach to our Vietnam Veterans. NDDVA would like to continue the appropriation as part of its budget, again at **\$50,000**.

(10) **Stand Downs**

This appropriation is to provide funding for Stand Down events in communities across North Dakota. during the 2013-15 biennium Stand Down events were conducted in Bismarck, Minot, Dickinson, Williston, Bottineau, Watford City and Fargo. These events bring many organizations together in one place to provide service to our veteran's in need. The main focus is directed at homeless veterans. The veteran's service organizations in North Dakota conduct fund raising and use other resources for these events also. This funding is needed to ensure these events continue. During the current biennium the funding for stand down events were expended in the first year. Historically \$20,000 has been sufficient for the biennium and the Governor has agreed and returned the funding to **\$20,000. Need to remove requirement for Federal Grant, the grant reduces the stand down to only homeless veteran.**

(11) **Transportation Vans: included in Governors Budget**

NDDVA's budget for 2013-2015 included **\$30,000** for the purchase of transportation vans. This funding along with funding from the Columbia Trust is used to purchase vans to transport veterans from across ND to the VAMC in Fargo. In working with the Columbia Trust NDDVA's has been able to purchase a van for \$14,000-\$14,500 during the last two bienniums. During the current biennium NDDVA purchased two vans. When we submit applications to the Columbia Trust we also request that the trust consider us for a free van, the trust provides 1 or 2 free vans nationwide each year. In 2014 North Dakota will receive **a free van** in addition to the vans we purchased. It is

our expectation that we will only need to purchase one more van in the next biennium. The Governor agreed with this request so **\$15,000** funding for vans was put in the 2015-2017 biennium budget.

(12) **Marketing / Advertising**

The North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs has never had marketing - advertising funds to let our Veteran know who we are, where we are and what we do. Much less that we exist. One of the biggest comments we hear from veterans when we do our outreach events is they did not know there were state and county veteran service officers. From that many do not know of the benefits they have earned and the services that are available to them.

The quickest and most efficient method to get the word out to our Veterans is through marketing and advertising. As the agency charged with the care of our veterans we need to be the forefront in making contact with our veterans and their families. We are requesting **\$20,000**.

(13) **Treatment/Study for Veterans with TBI**

HeartSprings is proposing a half day transitional program to begin to heal the brain and body of four military clients living with a traumatic brain injury. The program would highlight changes and challenges and assess the progress and potential future programming to get our ND veterans back to work and/or improve their quality of life.

Military service members comprise the highest per capita of citizens in the state of North Dakota than any other state in the United States. Additionally, North Dakota has the highest suicide rate per capita of veterans in the United States. Sixty percent (60%) of the veterans returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) have sustained blast injuries and almost sixty-seven percent (66.7%) of these veterans are returning to civilian life with a traumatic brain injury. These veterans are North Dakota community members who primarily serve as members of the North Dakota National Guard. These are citizen soldiers, who return to North Dakota to their families and their communities after they have served our country in war. Their chronic illnesses are over burdening the Veterans Healthcare System and taking an extreme toll on their families. We are requesting **\$108,352** for this issue.

Thank you

Lonnie L. Wangen
Commissioner
ND DVA

#3

3-11-15

**Senate Appropriations Committee
Testimony on House Bill 1025
By Rhonda M. Schauer
March 11, 2015**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, my name is Rhonda Schauer, Director for the North Dakota State Approving Agency. I appear in support of House Bill 1025.

State Approving Agencies (SAA's) are authorized by Title 38 of the United States Code. Each state has a SAA that is responsible for the approval of education and training programs to ensure that each program meets the requirements of Titles 38 and 10 of the United States Code. For veterans to receive education benefit payments, the education or training program in which they intend to enroll must be approved by the SAA. The SAA also provides continued program administrative oversight.

State Approving Agencies have six (6) core functions:

1. Approval of programs
2. Compliance visits to Schools and Training Establishments
3. Technical Assistance
4. Outreach
5. Liaison
6. Contract compliance

State Approving Agencies approve and monitor four (4) establishments:

1. IHL (Institutions of Higher Learning)
2. NCD (Non College Degree establishments)
3. OJT (on the job training)
4. Apprenticeship

The State Approving Agency function and budget has been housed within the North Dakota University System per Governor's assignment and legislative appropriation. HB 1025 would re-assign the function and budget from the North Dakota University System to the North Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs.

The bill before you includes a transfer of \$275,696 federal appropriation and 1.00 FTE for the State Approving Agency be from the North Dakota University System (HB1003) to the North Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs (HB1025). It should also be noted the SAA has a reserve fund that fluctuates between \$90-\$150,000 which accumulated over several years as a result of expenditures being less than the federal appropriation. This money is held in reserve to help offset any reductions in federal appropriation and unusual program expenses. These funds can only be used in support of the SAA program.

3.1

Re-assignment would provide an opportunity for the North Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs and North Dakota State Approving Agency to pool their resources and increase the number of veterans in the state who are eligible for their benefits. This re-assignment provides a necessary alignment of abilities so they can stand ready to meet the challenges before them.

The State Board of Higher Education supports this change. Thank you. I will try to answer any questions.

**North Dakota State Approving Agency – Federal GI Bill
Bismarck, North Dakota**

FACT SHEET

Overview

Fifty-five State Approving Agencies (SAA) approve programs for the GI Bill, including educational and non-college degree programs, e.g. CDL truck driving school, Flight Schools, as well as apprenticeship/OJT (App/OJT) programs.

Mission Statement

- To assist the VA in preventing waste, fraud and abuse in the administration of the GI Bill
- To provide quality assurance for the veterans' education and accountability for the taxpayers' investments
- To ensure greater educational and training opportunities to meet the changing needs of veterans
- To promote and safeguard quality education and training programs for persons eligible for the GI Bill

Primary Tasks and Goals

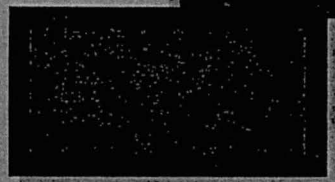
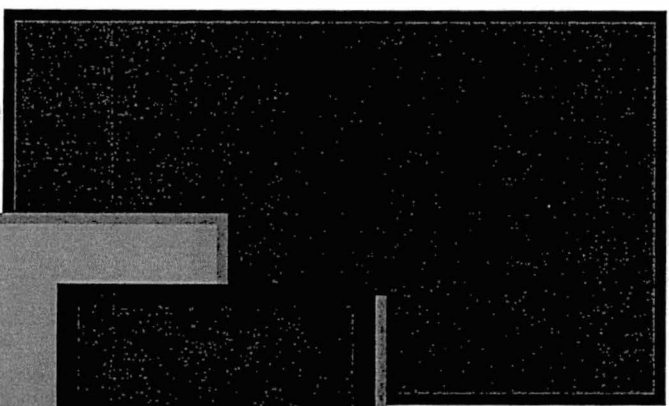
1. Approval of Programs: Evaluate compliance with federal regulations and take action on education and training programs seeking approval for GI Bill education benefits.
2. Compliance Survey Visits: Review the enrollment of persons eligible for the GI Bill in approved programs and verify payments by the VA to the schools, training establishments and GI Bill beneficiaries. Surveys are conducted to prevent deficiencies, and identify and correct compliance issues. FY15 Contract: 20 surveys are to be conducted by the SAA.
3. Other School Visits: The SAA conducts inspection visits to new schools and training facilities applying for program approval and technical assistance visits to schools currently approved, if needed.
4. Technical Assistance: Provide assistance to school certifying officials (SCO), eligible persons, et al, regarding approval criteria, certification of enrollment, facility or program issues and facilitation of benefits delivery.
5. Liaison & Outreach: Interact with the VA, other governmental agencies, schools, persons eligible for the GI Bill and professional organizations regarding the GI Bill.
6. Contract Compliance: Prepare and submit the SAA reimbursement contract, invoices and reports (e.g., quarterly report, Local Veteran Employment Representatives report, annual business plan and self-evaluation) to the VA. The VA contract funds one Director position. FY15 funding allocation is \$100,000.

Economic Impact - Federal GI Bill Benefits Paid to North Dakota Veterans and Dependents:

Programs	FFY13	FFY14
Chapter 30, Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB)	1.2 Million	1.1 Million
Chapter 33, Post-9/11 GI Bill	16.9 Million	19 Million
Chapter 1607 (REAP) & Chapter 1606 (Select Reserves) - Combined	2 Million	1.7 Million

(source: USDVA Education Services)

HB 1025
of
3.11-15



**North Dakota
State
Approving
Agency**

#4-1



State Approving Agency
725 Basin Avenue, Suite 6
Bismarck, ND 58504

Telephone:
701-328-5445

Website:
<http://www.ndus.edu>

What is the G.I. Bill?

On June 22, 1944, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed into law one of the most significant pieces of legislation ever produced by the United States government: The Servicemembers' Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the G.I. Bill of Rights. By the time the original G.I. Bill ® ended in July 1956, 7.8 million World War II veterans had participated in an education or training program. Today, the legacy of the original G.I. Bill® lives on in the Montgomery G.I. Bill.®

STATE APPROVING AGENCY

The State Approving Agency originated when the G.I. Bill of Rights was signed into law in 1944 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Congress recognized that each state has the right and responsibility for the education and training of its residents. The State Approving Agency together with the federal government manages veterans education benefits.

The State Approving Agency's (SAA) role is to approve and supervise the programs of education and training for eligible veterans, dependents, National Guard members, and reservists. The North Dakota State Approving Agency operates within the North Dakota University System.

The SAA must specifically approve each program of education or training in which a veteran or eligible person wishes to use G.I. Bill® benefits.

Post-9/11 GI Bill®—Chapter 33

A new GI Bill ®for individuals who served on active duty on or after September 11, 2011.

- * Effective August 1, 2009
- * Provisions include tuition and fees, basic housing allowance, a stipend for books and supplies
- * Benefits prorated based on the number of months of active duty since 9/11/2001 and the training time attending classes
- * Veterans eligible for Chapters 30, 1606, or 1607 may elect Chapter 33 benefits
- * Transferability of benefits to spouses and dependent children possible within DoD policy and procedures (TBP)
- * Some service and classes are excluded
- * Refer to www.gibill.va.gov for details

Veteran's Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) Chapter 32

Provides up to 36 months of education benefits to eligible veterans who paid into VEAP while they were in the service.

- * Eligibility dependent upon dates of enlistment and contribution to VEAP
- * Service after September 11, 2001 may qualify for Chapter 33
- * Refer to www.gibill.va.gov for details

Dependents Education Assistance (DEA) Chapter 35

Provides up to 45 months for eligible spouses and children of certain veterans.

- * Veteran died or is permanently and totally disabled as a result of a service connected Disability
- * Veteran died of any cause while a service connected disability was in effect
- * Service member missing, captured, detained, or interned under certain circumstances
- * VA establishes eligibility for 10 or 20 years benefit periods

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services Chapter 31

Education services and benefits for veterans with a 10% or greater service connected disability who require transition assistance to civilian life and employment.

Montgomery GI Bill®—Active Duty Chapter 30

Provides up to 36 months of education benefits to eligible veterans if you:

- * Entered active duty after June 30, 1985
- * Have a high school diploma or GED
- * Contributed \$1200 in first enlistment
- * Continuously served for 2 or 3 years depending on enlistment contract
- * Received an honorable discharge

Typically you have 10 years from date of discharge to use your MGIB benefits.

Montgomery GI Bill®—Selected Reserves Chapter 1606

Provides up to 36 months of benefits to members of the Selected Reserve

- * Does not require active duty to qualify
- * After June 30, 1985 incurred a six-year obligation and completed IADT
- * Have a high school diploma or GED
- * Are in good standing in a drilling unit
- * Typically, eligibility ends when you leave the Selected Reserves
- * Benefits generally end when separated from the Selected Reserve

Reserve Educational Assistance program Chapter 1607

Provides up to 36 months of education benefits to members of the Selected Reserve and Individual Ready Reserve who were called or ordered to Title 10 active duty in response to war or a national emergency.

- * Must have served at least 90 consecutive days under a contingency operation
- * Pays benefit based on the number of continuous days on active duty as a percentage of the MGIB-AD
- * Benefit generally ends when separated from the Selected Reserves unless entire Service contract is completed
- * Service in Sec 502 (f) Title 32 eligible
- * NDAA 2008 expanded benefits
- * Refer to www.gibill.va.gov for details

**Veterans, Dependents, Members of the National
Guard, and Reservists**

**Have You Considered Using Your G.I. Bill
Benefits for: On-the-Job Training or
Apprenticeship Programs**

**You may be eligible to receive a monthly G.I. Bill
benefit check from the U.S. Department of Veteran
Affairs (VA).**

What is On-the-Job Training?

On-the-Job Training (OJT) is training you receive while actually performing a job and earning wages, as well as receiving your G.I. Bill benefits. OJT programs normally range from six months to two years in length. Some examples of OJT are: Welder, Painter, Cook, Pressman, and Auto Mechanic.

What is Apprenticeship Training?

Apprenticeship Training is on-the-job training coupled with theoretical related instruction. You receive your G.I. Bill benefits while working full time and earning wages. Apprenticeship programs are normally from two to five years in length. Registration with the North Dakota Office of Apprenticeship is not mandatory for veterans benefits; however, it is recommended in order for the veteran to receive journeyman's papers upon successful completion. Some examples of currently approved apprenticeship programs are: Carpenter, Electrician, Brick Layer, Asbestos Worker, Plumber, Iron Worker, Corrections Officer, Machinist, and Maintenance Mechanic.

The jobs listed above are only a sample of the many jobs that can be approved for veterans benefits.

Time Limits

Active Duty (Chapter 30) veterans have ten (10) years from release from last period of active duty.

Post 9-11 (Chapter 33) veterans have fifteen (15) years from release from last period of active duty.

Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606) Effective June 30, 2008, members of the Selected Reserve with remaining Chapter 1606 entitlement will have eligibility until the date they separate from the Reserve.

REAP (Chapter 1607) No time limit as long as individual remains in the same level of the Ready Reserve from which called to active duty.

How to Begin

1. If you do not have a job, or if you are not working in the occupation you want contact your local Job Service . The Veteran's Employment Representative should be able to find an employer who can offer the kind of training you need to reach your occupational goal.
2. Next, either you or your employer should contact the North Dakota State Approving Agency so that the necessary steps can be taken to approve the training program. Keep in mind that not all occupations can be approved. Please contact the North Dakota State Approving Agency for more information.
3. Contact the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to determine your eligibility and to obtain the necessary application forms.

Benefits To Employers

- ★ Veterans who have worked in technically oriented military occupations are better prepared for civilian technical training.
- ★ Veterans who have demonstrated the aptitude to be trained in a structured environment.
- ★ Veterans who have developed a work ethic that enables them to report for work on time and in the proper frame of mind.
- ★ Veterans tend to be more mature, self-confident, and drug-free employees.
- ★ Veterans who receive G.I. Bill assistance will work toward a training objective and make satisfactory progress to receive continued benefits.
- ★ Veterans possess higher education and training achievements.
- ★ Veterans receive the same prevailing wage as other employees in the same position. Scheduled pay increases develop employee loyalty.
- ★ Veterans possess work traits such as adapting to physical demands, following safety guidelines, working under pressure, and setting priorities.

Employer record-keeping is minimal.



Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (DEA)

The following information is to provide information to High School Administrators, Counselors, Parents and Students regarding the **G.I. Bill**® and the benefits available for education and training. Students in either a **Public** High School or **Private** High School may already be **eligible for G.I. Bill benefits** as an **eligible dependent** if a parent is a veteran and meets certain criteria as explained in this brochure and if the student is **18 years of age**.

Counselors and parents can guide students by being informed of the educational and training opportunities available as a result of serving with our country's Armed Forces.

The DEA, also known as Chapter 35 of Title 38, U.S. Code, provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of certain veterans. To be eligible, you must be a son, daughter, or spouse of a

- * veteran who died or is permanently and totally disabled as the result of a service-connected disability. The disability must arise out of active service in the armed forces;
- * veteran who died from any cause while such service-connected disability was in existence;
- * service member who is missing in action or is captured in line of duty by a hostile force;
- * service member who is currently being forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power;
- * service member who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient treatment for a service connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability. This change is effective December 23, 2006.

How To Apply For Benefits

First, find out whether your school is approved for VA benefits—check with the school's administration or counselor. If the school has not requested approval before, ask an official to contact the North Dakota State Approving Agency to obtain approval.

North Dakota State Approving Agency

701-328-5445

E-mail: Rhonda.Schauer@ndus.edu

Second, complete the application (VA Form 22-5490) Application for Survivor's and Dependents' Educational Assistance) and submit it to the appropriate U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) regional office. You can obtain this form by going to www.gibill.va.gov, click on *Education Forms* and download the form or click on *Ask a Question* and request the form be sent to you.

Third, the school must certify your enrollment to the VA. See your Guidance Counselor for assistance.

How Much Educational Assistance Will You Receive?

You can always find the current rates at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/rates-index.asp>

**As a son or daughter, as long as you have entitlement left, you may
Generally receive benefits under this program from age 18-26 (8 years).**

You may be entitled to receive up to 45 months of education benefits.

4.8

Licensing & Certification Test Reimbursement for Veterans

Veterans and Eligible Individuals—Use Your G.I. Bill® for Licensing and Certification Tests

Having A License Or Certification Can Open Doors For You To Today's Workplace.

Many professions require a license or certification. Licensing tests are required by state or other government regulations. Certification Tests are voluntary, generally accepted credentials that can help you obtain, keep, or advance in a job. Certification tests are specific tests taken for a field of employment, not a certificate you receive for training.

This G.I. Bill ® benefit reimburses the eligible veteran or dependent under Chapters 30, 32, 33 or 35 for an approved licensing or certification test taken on or after March 1, 2001. Chapter 1606 and Chapter 1607 are reimbursed for tests taken after January 6, 2006. Licensing & Certification programs are payable under the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill®; however the housing allowance is not payable.

Applying for Reimbursement

Step 1. Apply for education benefits. You can complete and submit your application online. Go to www.gibill.va.gov. Select "Education Benefits" then click on "How to Apply for Benefits." If you've previously applied for education benefits, you don't need to apply again. Go to step 2.

Step 2. Apply for reimbursement. Send a signed and dated request with the following information:

- √ Name, Address, Phone Number, and Social Security Number (or VA file number).
- √ The name of the test you took and the date you took it.
- √ A copy of the test result (whether or not you passed it) or a copy of your license or certification if you have them.
- √ The name and address of the organization issuing the license or certification (not necessarily the organization that administered the test).
- √ The cost of each test. (*Note: registration fees, preparation guides, processing fees, Etc., will not be reimbursed.*)
- √ This statement "I AUTHORIZE THE RELEASE OF MY TEST INFORMATION TO VA."
- √ Your signature and date signed. (*IMPORTANT: Your claim cannot be processed without your signature.*)

You must give this information for each test taken.

Test Approval

To find out which tests are approved contact the North Dakota State Approving Agency or search the G.I. Bill® website for specific test approval information. If you can't find your test on the website, you should still apply for education benefits. If the test is not listed, it doesn't mean that it is not a valid test. It only means that it has not yet been approved or it has only recently been approved and has not been put on the list.

How Much Can I Receive?

You can receive reimbursement of up to \$2,000 per test, but not more than the approved cost of the test. You may receive benefits to **retake** a test you didn't pass (except for Chapter 33). You may receive benefits to retake a test you passed if the test is required for recertification or to allow you to retain a license you may already have.

You must be eligible for benefits in order to receive test reimbursement. Your total months of benefits will be reduced each time you receive reimbursement for a licensing or certification test.

Helpful Numbers and Addresses

North Dakota Veterans Affair
Telephone: 701-239-7165
Toll-free: 1-800-634-8387
Website: www.nd.gov/veterans

Other VA Benefit Inquires
Toll-free: 1-800-827-1000
Website: www.vba.va.gov

VA Regional Office
PO Box 66830
St Louis, MO 63166-6830

Fargo Vet Center
3310 Flechtner Drive, Suite 100
Fargo ND 58103
Telephone: 701-237-0942
Fax: 701-237-5734

Veterans Benefits Administration -
Central Area Office
Fargo Regional Office
2101 Elm Street
Fargo ND 58102-2417
Telephone: 701-451-4600

U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Apprenticeship
Barry Dutton, State Director
Telephone: 701-250-4700
Fax: 701-250-4703

GI Bill Education Benefit
Toll-free: 1-888-442-4551
Website: www.gibill.va.gov

VA Benefit Direct Deposit
Toll-free: 1-877-838-2778

Bismarck Vet Center
619 Riverwood Drive, Suite 105
Bismarck ND 58705
Telephone: 701-224-9751 or 224-9752
Fax: 701-223-5150

Minot Vet Center
1400 20th Avenue SW, Suite 2
Minot ND 58701
Telephone: 701-852-0177
Fax: 701-852-5225

Job Service of North Dakota
Veteran Representatives

Bismarck: Joe Hall
Telephone: 701-328-5048

Fargo: Brad Aune
Telephone: 701-239-7338

Minot: Susan OGurek
Telephone: 701-857-7523

Grand Forks: Roy Fillion
Telephone: 701-795-3788
Grand Forks: Andrew Nathan
Telephone: 701-795-3741

Questions

For questions about VA educational benefits, or to speak to an education case manager, call 1-888-GI Bill ®1 (1-888-442-4551) (toll free) Monday through Friday during normal business hours.

Log on to the website <http://www.gibill.va.gov> for information about the following topics:

- *Information on various benefit programs*
- *Your own benefits account if you are receiving Montgomery GI Bill® benefits*
- *Verifying monthly enrollments to receive payments*

The VA website also provides links to the following information:

- *Licensing and certification page*
- *Education benefit payment rates*
- *VA forms*
- *Online applications*
- *Transition assistance information*
- *Regulations and policy information*
- *Education news*

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HB 1025
3-11-15

NORTH DAKOTA VETERANS COORDINATING COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

My name is Lyle Schuchard, I AM A MEMBER OF THE Legislative Committee of the North Dakota Veterans Coordinating Council. The Coordinating Council is made up of 15 members, 3 from each of the five veterans' organizations in North Dakota. They are:

American Legion

AMVETS

Disabled American Veterans

Veterans of Foreign Wars

Vietnam Veterans of America

I served in the United States Army for two years and in the Army Reserves for 26 years, retiring as a Sergeant Major.

It is the policy of the Coordinating Council to support Legislation that will benefit the welfare of the members of the Armed Forces. The committee must concur totally, that is all 15 members must agree on the Legislation to be supported, or else it does not get the support.

In this case I have been instructed to recommend to this Legislative Committee that a "Do Pass" on HB 1025 is supported by the Veterans Coordinating Council. Mr. Chairman that is my testimony.

If there are any questions I will try to answer them at this time.

*22 suicides by Veterans per day,
there is a crisis line set up for
Veterans to call...*



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#6
HB1025
3-11-15

HB 1025 – Veterans Affairs

Senate Appropriations

Chairman Holmberg and members of Senate Appropriations, my name is Jaclyn Hall and I am the Executive Director of Ruth Meiers Hospitality House in Bismarck ND. I am here today to discuss an increasing concern in our agency and agencies across North Dakota – the increase in Homeless Veterans.

Each year shelters across the state of ND provide support to Veterans and their families.

- 2013 -
 - Ruth Meiers provided 3,709 nights of shelter to 58 Homeless Veterans.
- 2014 –
 - Ruth Meiers provided 5,007 nights to 81 Homeless Veterans – a 40% increase over 2013.
 - The Mission in Grand Forks provided 1,908 nights of shelter to 70 homeless Veterans.
 - In Minot, over 40 homeless Veterans received services in lieu of a homeless shelter in this community.
 - New Freedom Center in Fargo served over 200 Veterans in 2014 with almost 10,000 nights of shelter.

Last Biennium, Ruth Meiers received funding through the Housing Incentive Fund to add affordable housing to our community. Currently 16 homeless Veterans have transitioned to permanent housing with 12 of these individuals supported through HUD Vash Vouchers. However, this is not enough.

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As you consider the budget for the Veteran's Affairs office, I ask you to consider these concerns and look at ways to support these individuals through this budget. Our needs include:

- Additional affordable housing
- Increased reemployment training for Veterans through Job Service
- Discretionary grants to provide individualized support for agencies
- Permanent positions in the Military Service Center

Thank you for giving me the time to speak to you this morning. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Testimony on HB 1025
Senate Appropriations Committee
Department of Veterans Affairs
March 11, 2015

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HB 1025

3-26-15

Chairman Holmberg and Committee Members:

2015-2017 Requested Budget Changes:

Restore Base Budget Funding

To restore base budget funding to maintain operating levels for the 2015-2017 biennium. Costs increases in travel impact the agency's ability to participate and attend Outreach events throughout the State, as well as conduct CVSO training. Supplies - IT Software and IT Equipment under \$5,000 funds will continue our ability to stay current with technology changes and the agency's replacement schedule as recommended by ITD. Supplies - IT Software also includes vendor agreements covering our Claims and Loan Program software programs. These agreements cover support, maintenance, upgrades and off-site backups of these important programs. IT Contractual Services covers ongoing costs for transfers of DD214s from our VetraSpec software system (handles VA claims documents) to the State's Filenet system. This cost would be \$47,846.

(1) **Increase to the Post War Trust Fund – One time**

The funding available for service to benefits from the PWTF is not enough to fully fund all programs and properly care for our veteran's. In the interest of caring for our veterans of today and ensuring we can provide for the un-met needs of our veterans in the future we have determined that an additional \$2,000,000 in principal is needed. This principal amount will never be spent-only invested so the interest earnings can be distributed. During the 63rd legislative assembly HB 1468 requested \$2,000,000. \$250,000 was appropriated and added to the principal of the PWTF. Under the direction and advice of the 63rd legislative assembly leadership we are requesting the remaining **\$1,750,000** to our budget.

(2) **Veterans Organizations NSO Office**

Currently the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (NDDVA) acts as the Power of Attorney (POA) for Veteran Service Organizations which cannot support a POA in the state of North Dakota. The North Dakota Chapters of the American Legion and the VFW have indicated that they are no longer financially situated to fund their POA positions at the Fargo VA Regional Office. The VFW has indicated that 60% of this year's entire states budget went to the POA's at the Fargo VA Regional Office, their memberships are down and they foresee, with the trend of the past years, the department will not be capable of funding these positions in the very near future.

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The VFW and American Legion POA officers are funded only by their state organizations. The DAV also provides POA services at the Fargo VARO. They are funded by their National organizations, which have shown some concern over funding as well.

During the current biennium the National AMVETS eliminated their POA in North Dakota. The POA was taken over by the NDDVA which increased our workload. If the VFW, DAV and American Legion cannot fund these positions-this could fall on the NDDVA to provide services to these veterans.

To ensure that each organization can continue to fund their POA's at the Fargo VARO we are requesting a \$50,000 per year per organization grant from the NDDVA budget to supplement their operating expenses. This would be \$50,000 x 3 organizations or \$150,000 per year totaling **\$300,000** per biennium.

(3) **State Approving Agency: Included in Governors budget**

The 2015-17 budget includes federal funding in the amount of **\$275,696** for the State Approving Authority (SAA) to move under the Department. The SAA is currently located within Higher Education. The funding includes one FTE position along with operating expenses. We are already working closely with Rhonda Schauer, Director, State Approving Agency, and anticipate a smooth transition. She has already relocated to our Bismarck office and is proving to be an additional resource to the Department in providing services to veterans. This move is supported by the current VA Director, the past two and current Interim Chancellor, the ND SAA Director, and the ND DVA Commissioner. Approximately 24 States have their Department of Veterans Affairs oversee their State Approving Agencies.

(4) **Salary Equity Funding.**

We have had significant turnover in the past year and a half. Since the start of the biennium we have replaced two out of four Veterans Benefits Special positions and one has recently resigned, we also replaced our Financial Programs Manager. All were due to gaining higher compensation. We had four of our top candidates refuse employment due to the compensation package we could offer, this was for just one position we were trying to fill. We have an employee with over 30 years in our agency that is still not at the MPP. In looking at the last legislative session and the target goal to have state employees compensated at 95% of the MPP we would need an additional \$96,143. The Governor recognized the need of our small agency and put in **\$55,100** to start to address this problem.

(5) **Training Position**

In an attempt to meet the demand for training we are proposing **one new FTE** to act as the training officer & benefits specialist. 70% of the training officer's time would be spent attending training, producing training programs, creating training kits and binders and conducting training with CVSO's. This would include complete initial

training for new CVSO's as well as continued training on basic and advanced levels of knowledge for current CVSO's. 30% of the training officer's time would be spent doing hands on work helping veterans obtain benefits such as filing claims, as they will need to be proficient at what they are instructing and changes happen frequently. One of the biggest concerns our CVSO's seem to have revolves around training. We need more staff dedicated to training in order to properly accomplish this objective. Better trained and informed CVSO's will result in much better services to our veterans and their dependents. This will greatly improve the lives of many of our veteran's and their dependents.

An added note: the Federal VA expended over \$334,755,000.00 in 2013 and over \$279,238,000.00 in 2012. That is over half a Billion Dollars in Federal funds coming into North Dakota during the last Biennium. Without VSO's this does not happen. Also this is an increase of over \$55,000,000.00 in just one year. The increase difference between 2012 and 2011 was \$44,000,000.00. Better trained VSO's will be able to improve on this. We are asking for **\$135,575** funding for this position.

(6) **Website Upgrade – One time**

During the last two legislative sessions we asked for our website upgrade that would convert our agency website to Drupal CMS enabling department staff to make content changes to the pages on the website. The website is still hosted by ND ITD and held to the Web Standards in place. During the 2013-15 biennium we needed to have ITD analyze and estimate the cost to finish the website. The project is not completed and an estimated **\$60,935** is needed to complete the website upgrade.

(7) **Temp Employees**

Temporary employee needed to assist NDDVA in collecting data, researching available resources, and contacting stakeholders required to complete projects and programs NDDVA's is working on. Such as Coordination of Mental health providers, Establishing a Veterans Court, establishing help for veterans with barriers to education due to; PTSD, reintegration issues, and TBI; coordinating opportunities for veteran entrepreneurs, employment opportunities, addressing veteran homelessness, transportation to medical services, establishing a Fischer House for the ND Veterans, Website data, healthcare and other benefits available to veterans. We are requesting **\$59,488** for temporary employees.

(8) **Service Dogs for Veterans with PTSD**

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a real illness which greatly affects the quality of lives for well over 35% of our veterans. PTSD is also a large contributing factor in the alarming rate of suicides within our veteran community. Nationally it is estimated that a veteran will successfully commit suicide every 62 minutes which results in over 8,400 suicides per year. In 2012 North Dakota had 18 Veteran Suicides and 25 in 2011. As a comparison we have lost 26 North Dakotans in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001. We have lost over 230 North Dakotan Veterans to

suicide since 2001 (without the 2013 numbers). These service dogs can greatly improve the quality of lives of our veterans who have many hidden injuries from their war experiences. The 63rd legislative assemblies SB 2344 appropriated **\$50,000** to the NDDVA for the purchase of service dogs for our veterans. These funds will be used this biennium and with the number of applications coming in it is easy to see that more help is needed. We would like to continue this appropriation in our budget at **\$100,000**.

(9) **Agent Orange Outreach**

Agent Orange is a highly toxic herbicide used by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War to defoliate hiding places used by the Viet Cong, rice paddies and fields that provided them with food, and to clear the perimeters of military bases to give service members a clear line of fire. Although colorless, it is known as "Agent Orange" because of an orange band painted on the drums used to store and transports it. Over 50 diseases are linked to Agent Orange exposure to include diabetes, Parkinson's, heart diseases, many cancers and birth defects.

North Dakota's 63rd legislative assembly appropriated \$50,000 to NDDVA as grant funding to provide outreach to our Vietnam Veterans. NDDVA would like to continue the appropriation as part of its budget, again at **\$50,000**.

(10) **Stand Downs**

This appropriation is to provide funding for Stand Down events in communities across North Dakota. during the 2013-15 biennium Stand Down events were conducted in Bismarck, Minot, Dickinson, Williston, Bottineau, Watford City and Fargo. These events bring many organizations together in one place to provide service to our veteran's in need. The main focus is directed at homeless veterans. The veteran's service organizations in North Dakota conduct fund raising and use other resources for these events also. This funding is needed to ensure these events continue. During the current biennium the funding for stand down events were expended in the first year. Historically \$20,000 has been sufficient for the biennium and the Governor has agreed and returned the funding to **\$20,000. Need to remove requirement for Federal Grant, the grant reduces the stand down to only homeless veteran.**

(11) **Transportation Vans: included in Governors Budget**

NDDVA's budget for 2013-2015 included **\$30,000** for the purchase of transportation vans. This funding along with funding from the Columbia Trust is used to purchase vans to transport veterans from across ND to the VAMC in Fargo. In working with the Columbia Trust NDDVA's has been able to purchase a van for \$14,000-\$14,500 during the last two bienniums. During the current biennium NDDVA purchased two vans. When we submit applications to the Columbia Trust we also request that the trust consider us for a free van, the trust provides 1 or 2 free vans nationwide each year. In 2014 North Dakota will receive a **free van** in addition to the vans we purchased. It is

our expectation that we will only need to purchase one more van in the next biennium. The Governor agreed with this request so **\$15,000** funding for vans was put in the 2015-2017 biennium budget.

(12) **Marketing / Advertising**

The North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs has never had marketing - advertising funds to let our Veteran know who we are, where we are and what we do. Much less that we exist. One of the biggest comments we hear from veterans when we do our outreach events is they did not know there were state and county veteran service officers. From that many do not know of the benefits they have earned and the services that are available to them.

The quickest and most efficient method to get the word out to our Veterans is through marketing and advertising. As the agency charged with the care of our veterans we need to be the forefront in making contact with our veterans and their families. We are requesting **\$20,000**.

(13) **Treatment/Study for Veterans with TBI**

HeartSprings is proposing a half day transitional program to begin to heal the brain and body of four military clients living with a traumatic brain injury. The program would highlight changes and challenges and assess the progress and potential future programming to get our ND veterans back to work and/or improve their quality of life.

Military service members comprise the highest per capita of citizens in the state of North Dakota than any other state in the United States. Additionally, North Dakota has the highest suicide rate per capita of veterans in the United States. Sixty percent (60%) of the veterans returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) have sustained blast injuries and almost sixty-seven percent (66.7%) of these veterans are returning to civilian life with a traumatic brain injury. These veterans are North Dakota community members who primarily serve as members of the North Dakota National Guard. These are citizen soldiers, who return to North Dakota to their families and their communities after they have served our country in war. Their chronic illnesses are over burdening the Veterans Healthcare System and taking an extreme toll on their families. We are requesting **\$108,352** for this issue.

Thank you

Lonnie L. Wangen
Commissioner
ND DVA

HB 1025 #1
4-6-15



Software Development Division Budget Estimate

To: Lonnie Wangen, Cathy Halgunseth ND Department of Veterans Affairs	Date Issued: 7/30/2014	Prior Est. Date: 7/23/2014
	From: Della Thorsness	
	Prepared By: Misty Curn	
Project Description: Add components to existing Drupal Website		
WMS Work Order Number: 229965	WMS Service Request: 1515649	

ITD is recommending your agency budget **\$60,935** for this project. This amount includes an estimated **\$55,395** based on requirements we received during the interview process plus an additional **\$5,540** for scope changes. The additional **10%** is based on ITD's experience with scope changes in projects this size. Including this additional amount will give your agency the flexibility to cover typical scope changes, and remain within your budgeted amount. A more accurate estimate will be prepared once this project has started and the analysis phase is completed. The cost to complete the analysis phase is estimated to be approximately **\$9,338**.

What you get for your money from ITD

ITD estimates that this website will take about **3 months** to complete. This timeframe is a projected timeframe based on typical project staffing levels. The actual timeframe will be determined during the Planning Phase and will be based on the availability of customer and ITD resources at that time.

ITD suggests you budget **\$20** per month for the on-going cost of maintenance. This amount includes the hosting charges, estimated storage and Software Development maintenance costs. All ITD services will be billed to your department monthly at actual cost.

Should you decide to proceed with this project, please approve the cost estimate via the online Work Management System. Upon your approval, you will be prompted to submit a service request under the existing work order. All ITD services relating to this project will be billed to your department monthly at actual cost.

At the start of the project ITD will review any estimate over 90 days old. If necessary a revised estimate will be issued.

'ITD - Software that works'

ITD Work Order and Service Request Number: 229965/1515649

Project: Add components to existing Drupal Website

Project Description

This project covers the following additional components North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs has requested for their Drupal website.

- Adding a running counter on each State Heroes overview page (Fallen, POW, MIA, Medal of Honor, Silver Star, etc)
- Adding a running counter on each State Heroes conflict page (Iraq, WWI, Vietnam, etc)
- Adding a running counter of heroes on each county page
- Add capability for Veterans Affairs to create North Dakota maps on their website. These maps can be added to any page and the data associated with each county could be changed by NDVA content managers.
- Build "search" functionality into NDVA website. This would appear similar to the search results page on www.yellowpages.com. The goal would be to allow end users to search for a particular service and they would get a list of NDVA-preferred providers that offer that service.

This budget cost estimate is being developed based on the above requirements provided by Lonnie Wangen, and a high level review of the current site.

Assumptions

The one-time costs (development) of the routines are based on the following assumptions:

- The cost estimate used the 2015-2017 biennium rate of \$115 per hour.
 - The website will continue to be hosted on the state apache web server. NDVA staff will not have access to the server, but will have access to change, edit, and update all content, files, menus, images, etc. on the Drupal site.
 - This estimate excludes the design/development of any new applications.
 - The site components will be rendered in markup language and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) consistent with current approved North Dakota Web Development Standards based on guidelines from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).
 - The site components will be designed with conformance to Level I & II W3C Web Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 (WCAG) in accordance with State of North Dakota Web Development Standards.
 - All North Dakota State Government development standards and policies will be implemented in the development of the new web site. The URL for North Dakota State Government development standards and policies is <http://www.nd.gov/itd/standards>.
 - The nd.gov banner will be displayed at the top of the web site per www.nd.gov/banner.
 - ND Veterans Affairs staff will be available as needed for questions and design meetings.
 - The project will follow ND ITD's software development quality assurance methodology and processes
 - ND Veterans Affairs staff is responsible for securing any needed approvals from the owning agency for any data access needs, interfaces, waivers, etc. that may be necessary for this project.
- All updates to content will be done with a web browser through the administrative pages of the CMS. \ HTML knowledge is helpful, but not required.
- Due to the themed nature of the content, additional inline styling of content should be avoided. This may require using a simple text editor or a CMS tool to remove extraneous formatting from content copied from word processing software like MS Word.
- The website will secure user access to functionality using state Microsoft Active Directory accounts/groups.

- File names for documents should be created to conform to State of North Dakota standardized naming conventions. ITD file naming for web development utilizes only lowercase lettering together with dashes to separate words if necessary. The CMS may in some cases force compliance of these standards. We suggest all future documents be considered first for HTML conversion and only convert to RTF or PDF where necessary. HTML documents can be set up in a textual, printable format allowing the information to download at an acceptable speed over a dial-up connection.

Determining Costs

The Drupal will be built with the overall intent of making content entry and editing simple for the ND Department of Veterans Affairs staff while providing a user-friendly experience for site visitors.

The cost estimate was based on hours to build/create the following:

Content Types

Drupal refers to each piece of content as a node. It allows for the organization of nodes into groups called Content Types. This is used for organizational purposes, to make site updates easier, and to control access.

Views

“Views” refers to a function of Drupal that allows for the organization, grouping and filtering of content. This functionality may control display, format, and access to content. It may be used to generate reports, create summaries, and display collections of text, documents, images and other content. In this document, hours were estimated based on content types, complexity of displays, and the number of views that need to be created.

New Modules/Functionality

Costs have been included to analyze and determine the best approach to incorporate new features and modules to the site as deemed necessary by the requirements in the Project Description above.

Reviews

Reviews within the ITD web design staff will be conducted as needed for feedback during the phases of the web design projects.

Final Testing and Launching

Final tests are performed by ITD staff to ensure all parts of the websites are working correctly. Launch hours are used for moving the site from a development server to a production server.

Training

Training time has been included to show NDVA staff how to use the new components that are added to their Drupal website.

Breakdown of costs by component:

- \$3,388 - Adding a running counter on each State Heroes overview page (Fallen, POW, MIA, Medal of Honor, Silver Star, etc)
- \$3,388 - Adding a running counter on each State Heroes conflict page (Iraq, WWI, Vietnam, etc)
- \$3,388 - Adding a running counter of heroes on each county page
- \$25,322 - Add capability for Veterans Affairs to create North Dakota maps on their website. These maps can be added to any page and the data associated with each county could be changed by NDVA content managers.
- \$25,449 - Build “search” functionality into NDVA website. This would appear similar to the search results page on www.yellowpages.com. The goal would be to allow end users to search for a particular service and they would get a list of NDVA-preferred providers that offer that service.

One-Time Cost for System Development

The cost for development of the ND Department of Veterans Affairs website is estimated to be \$60,935. This amount includes an estimated \$55,395 based on requirements and an additional \$5,540 for scope changes. The additional 10% is based on ITD's experience with scope changes in projects this size. Including this additional amount will give your agency the flexibility to cover typical scope changes, and remain within your budgeted amount. A more accurate estimate will be prepared once this project has started and the analysis phase is completed.

Hosting

Monthly web hosting fees are based on the web site's functionality and disk usage. Current analysis suggests that the basic hosting fee of \$20 per month will continue to be sufficient.



Providing Customer-Centric Services

The Information Technology Department (ITD) provides technology leadership for state government and the people of North Dakota. ITD exists solely to help State agencies discover, assess, and implement information technologies. ITD's Software Development Division develops, implements, operates and supports software solutions that meet our customer's need as provided in this cost estimate. ITD also provides server computing, local and wide area network support, voice and data technologies, video conferencing, and other emerging technologies. The following overview describes the services ITD considers valuable to our customers. We hope you'll find this helpful in assessing the value of our services.

State Government IT Partner

ITD knows the business of North Dakota State government and understands inter-agency relationships. We've been servicing State agencies since 1968. Upon request, we'll provide references offering honest referrals about our services.

Our customer relationships are long-term partnerships.

Affordable Cutting Edge Technology

ITD helps agencies discover best fit solutions for their agency at affordable rates. ITD charges only to recover costs – we retain no profit with our low rates. Our staff is trained in many new and existing technologies, so we can readily assess customer requirements and provide solutions that best fit an agency's needs. ITD implements and supports IT solutions on modern hardware in modern facilities, using operating systems and software no older than current version minus 1.

Whenever it's necessary to extend our capabilities, we augment our current staff with outside vendors to meet demands.

Quality

ITD develops applications within the processes of a structured systems development methodology. This includes functional testing and all applications are tested for usability and performance (load tested). ITD Meets State & Federal Audit Compliance. Our infrastructure and operation processes are reviewed by and meet state and federal audit requirements. ITD Supports State Enterprise Architecture Standards, and our software and infrastructure meet North Dakota Enterprise Architecture standards.

We build compliance into our service offerings which relieves the customer of State standard compliance concerns.

Educated & Experienced Staff

ITD employees submit to an FBI background check and are bound by the same confidentiality requirements as agency staff. ITD's staff is cross-trained to provide continuous backup. We provide dedicated architects to design effective, top-notch infrastructure for security, system hosting, software development, and telecommunications. Our staff applies formal project management practices to all projects.

ITD strives to retain innovative, talented, and dedicated staff. ITD's staff is tenured with an average of 13 years of service.

Support Structure

ITD offers several levels of customer support, including 24 x 7 support for applications and infrastructure.

Customer Service Surveys indicate 99% of customers are very satisfied with our support.

Flexible Infrastructure

ITD's infrastructure and support structure are designed to meet varied needs. ITD designs and builds applications that can operate in a redundant environment. If one server fails, another server picks up the workload with little or no down time.

We can design and host any size application.

Disaster Recovery

ITD has the tools and resources required to monitor software applications and computer system infrastructure to assure adequate performance and up-time. Applications can be monitored on a 24 x 7 basis. If a disaster occurs in our Computer Systems area or Statewide Network, customer applications can be running within hours.

ITD's standard practice is to keep all data, applications, and systems backed up in a secure location to meet customer expectations.

Security

Investing in the infrastructure and training required to prevent malicious activity within our IT environment, ITD has dedicated staff to ensure that customer data and applications are secure.

We use source code control software to provide sound source code management.

[Back to Estimate](#)

Testimony on HB 1025
Senate Appropriations Committee
Department of Veterans Affairs
March 11, 2015

1025
Subcom

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4-7-15

Chairman Holmberg and Committee Members:

2015-2017 Requested Budget Changes:

Restore Base Budget Funding

To restore base budget funding to maintain operating levels for the 2015-2017 biennium. Costs increases in travel impact the agency's ability to participate and attend Outreach events throughout the State, as well as conduct CVSO training. Supplies - IT Software and IT Equipment under \$5,000 funds will continue our ability to stay current with technology changes and the agency's replacement schedule as recommended by ITD. Supplies - IT Software also includes vendor agreements covering our Claims and Loan Program software programs. These agreements cover support, maintenance, upgrades and off-site backups of these important programs. IT Contractual Services covers ongoing costs for transfers of DD214s from our VetraSpec software system (handles VA claims documents) to the State's Filenet system. This cost would be \$47,846.

(1) **Increase to the Post War Trust Fund – One time**

The funding available for service to benefits from the PWTF is not enough to fully fund all programs and properly care for our veteran's. In the interest of caring for our veterans of today and ensuring we can provide for the un-met needs of our veterans in the future we have determined that an additional \$2,000,000 in principal is needed. This principal amount will never be spent-only invested so the interest earnings can be distributed. During the 63rd legislative assembly HB 1468 requested \$2,000,000. \$250,000 was appropriated and added to the principal of the PWTF. Under the direction and advice of the 63rd legislative assembly leadership we are requesting the remaining **\$1,750,000** to our budget.

(2) **Veterans Organizations NSO Office**

Currently the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (NDDVA) acts as the Power of Attorney (POA) for Veteran Service Organizations which cannot support a POA in the state of North Dakota. The North Dakota Chapters of the American Legion and the VFW have indicated that they are no longer financially situated to fund their POA positions at the Fargo VA Regional Office. The VFW has indicated that 60% of this year's entire states budget went to the POA's at the Fargo VA Regional Office, their memberships are down and they foresee, with the trend of the past years, the department will not be capable of funding these positions in the very near future.

1.1

The VFW and American Legion POA officers are funded only by their state organizations. The DAV also provides POA services at the Fargo VARO. They are funded by their National organizations, which have shown some concern over funding as well.

During the current biennium the National AMVETS eliminated their POA in North Dakota. The POA was taken over by the NDDVA which increased our workload. If the VFW, DAV and American Legion cannot fund these positions-this could fall on the NDDVA to provide services to these veterans.

To ensure that each organization can continue to fund their POA's at the Fargo VARO we are requesting a \$50,000 per year per organization grant from the NDDVA budget to supplement their operating expenses. This would be \$50,000 x 3 organizations or \$150,000 per year totaling **\$300,000** per biennium.

(3) **State Approving Agency: Included in Governors budget**

The 2015-17 budget includes federal funding in the amount of **\$275,696** for the State Approving Authority (SAA) to move under the Department. The SAA is currently located within Higher Education. The funding includes one FTE position along with operating expenses. We are already working closely with Rhonda Schauer, Director, State Approving Agency, and anticipate a smooth transition. She has already relocated to our Bismarck office and is proving to be an additional resource to the Department in providing services to veterans. This move is supported by the current VA Director, the past two and current Interim Chancellor, the ND SAA Director, and the ND DVA Commissioner. Approximately 24 States have their Department of Veterans Affairs oversee their State Approving Agencies.

(4) **Salary Equity Funding.**

We have had significant turnover in the past year and a half. Since the start of the biennium we have replaced two out of four Veterans Benefits Special positions and one has recently resigned, we also replaced our Financial Programs Manager. All were due to gaining higher compensation. We had four of our top candidates refuse employment due to the compensation package we could offer, this was for just one position we were trying to fill. We have an employee with over 30 years in our agency that is still not at the MPP. In looking at the last legislative session and the target goal to have state employees compensated at 95% of the MPP we would need an additional \$96,143. The Governor recognized the need of our small agency and put in **\$55,100** to start to address this problem.

(5) **Training Position**

In an attempt to meet the demand for training we are proposing **one new FTE** to act as the training officer & benefits specialist. 70% of the training officer's time would be spent attending training, producing training programs, creating training kits and binders and conducting training with CVSO's. This would include complete initial

training for new CVSO's as well as continued training on basic and advanced levels of knowledge for current CVSO's. 30% of the training officer's time would be spent doing hands on work helping veterans obtain benefits such as filing claims, as they will need to be proficient at what they are instructing and changes happen frequently. One of the biggest concerns our CVSO's seem to have revolves around training. We need more staff dedicated to training in order to properly accomplish this objective. Better trained and informed CVSO's will result in much better services to our veterans and their dependents. This will greatly improve the lives of many of our veteran's and their dependents.

An added note: the Federal VA expended over \$334,755,000.00 in 2013 and over \$279,238,000.00 in 2012. That is over half a Billion Dollars in Federal funds coming into North Dakota during the last Biennium. Without VSO's this does not happen. Also this is an increase of over \$55,000,000.00 in just one year. The increase difference between 2012 and 2011 was \$44,000,000.00. Better trained VSO's will be able to improve on this. We are asking for **\$135,575** funding for this position.

(6) **Website Upgrade – One time**

During the last two legislative sessions we asked for our website upgrade that would convert our agency website to Drupal CMS enabling department staff to make content changes to the pages on the website. The website is still hosted by ND ITD and held to the Web Standards in place. During the 2013-15 biennium we needed to have ITD analyze and estimate the cost to finish the website. The project is not completed and an estimated **\$60,935** is needed to complete the website upgrade.

(7) **Temp Employees**

Temporary employee needed to assist NDDVA in collecting data, researching available resources, and contacting stakeholders required to complete projects and programs NDDVA's is working on. Such as Coordination of Mental health providers, Establishing a Veterans Court, establishing help for veterans with barriers to education due to; PTSD, reintegration issues, and TBI; coordinating opportunities for veteran entrepreneurs, employment opportunities, addressing veteran homelessness, transportation to medical services, establishing a Fischer House for the ND Veterans, Website data, healthcare and other benefits available to veterans. We are requesting **\$59,488** for temporary employees.

(8) **Service Dogs for Veterans with PTSD**

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a real illness which greatly affects the quality of lives for well over 35% of our veterans. PTSD is also a large contributing factor in the alarming rate of suicides within our veteran community. Nationally it is estimated that a veteran will successfully commit suicide every 62 minutes which results in over 8,400 suicides per year. In 2012 North Dakota had 18 Veteran Suicides and 25 in 2011. As a comparison we have lost 26 North Dakotans in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001. We have lost over 230 North Dakotan Veterans to

suicide since 2001 (without the 2013 numbers). These service dogs can greatly improve the quality of lives of our veterans who have many hidden injuries from their war experiences. The 63rd legislative assemblies SB 2344 appropriated \$50,000 to the NDDVA for the purchase of service dogs for our veterans. These funds will be used this biennium and with the number of applications coming in it is easy to see that more help is needed. We would like to continue this appropriation in our budget at \$100,000.

(9) **Agent Orange Outreach**

Agent Orange is a highly toxic herbicide used by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War to defoliate hiding places used by the Viet Cong, rice paddies and fields that provided them with food, and to clear the perimeters of military bases to give service members a clear line of fire. Although colorless, it is known as "Agent Orange" because of an orange band painted on the drums used to store and transports it. Over 50 diseases are linked to Agent Orange exposure to include diabetes, Parkinson's, heart diseases, many cancers and birth defects.

North Dakota's 63rd legislative assembly appropriated \$50,000 to NDDVA as grant funding to provide outreach to our Vietnam Veterans. NDDVA would like to continue the appropriation as part of its budget, again at \$50,000.

(10) **Stand Downs**

This appropriation is to provide funding for Stand Down events in communities across North Dakota. during the 2013-15 biennium Stand Down events were conducted in Bismarck, Minot, Dickinson, Williston, Bottineau, Watford City and Fargo. These events bring many organizations together in one place to provide service to our veteran's in need. The main focus is directed at homeless veterans. The veteran's service organizations in North Dakota conduct fund raising and use other resources for these events also. This funding is needed to ensure these events continue. During the current biennium the funding for stand down events were expended in the first year. Historically \$20,000 has been sufficient for the biennium and the Governor has agreed and returned the funding to **\$20,000. Need to remove requirement for Federal Grant, the grant reduces the stand down to only homeless veteran.**

(11) **Transportation Vans: included in Governors Budget**

NDDVA's budget for 2013-2015 included \$30,000 for the purchase of transportation vans. This funding along with funding from the Columbia Trust is used to purchase vans to transport veterans from across ND to the VAMC in Fargo. In working with the Columbia Trust NDDVA's has been able to purchase a van for \$14,000-\$14,500 during the last two bienniums. During the current biennium NDDVA purchased two vans. When we submit applications to the Columbia Trust we also request that the trust consider us for a free van, the trust provides 1 or 2 free vans nationwide each year. In 2014 North Dakota will receive a free van in addition to the vans we purchased. It is

our expectation that we will only need to purchase one more van in the next biennium. The Governor agreed with this request so \$15,000 funding for vans was put in the 2015-2017 biennium budget.

(12) **Marketing / Advertising**

The North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs has never had marketing - advertising funds to let our Veteran know who we are, where we are and what we do. Much less that we exist. One of the biggest comments we hear from veterans when we do our outreach events is they did not know there were state and county veteran service officers. From that many do not know of the benefits they have earned and the services that are available to them.

The quickest and most efficient method to get the word out to our Veterans is through marketing and advertising. As the agency charged with the care of our veterans we need to be the forefront in making contact with our veterans and their families. We are requesting \$20,000.

(13) **Treatment/Study for Veterans with TBI**

HeartSprings is proposing a half day transitional program to begin to heal the brain and body of four military clients living with a traumatic brain injury. The program would highlight changes and challenges and assess the progress and potential future programming to get our ND veterans back to work and/or improve their quality of life.

Military service members comprise the highest per capita of citizens in the state of North Dakota than any other state in the United States. Additionally, North Dakota has the highest suicide rate per capita of veterans in the United States. Sixty percent (60%) of the veterans returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) have sustained blast injuries and almost sixty-seven percent (66.7%) of these veterans are returning to civilian life with a traumatic brain injury. These veterans are North Dakota community members who primarily serve as members of the North Dakota National Guard. These are citizen soldiers, who return to North Dakota to their families and their communities after they have served our country in war. Their chronic illnesses are over burdening the Veterans Healthcare System and taking an extreme toll on their families. We are requesting \$108,352 for this issue.

Thank you

Lonnie L. Wangen
Commissioner
ND DVA

#1
 4-9-15

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1025

Page 1, replace line 12 with:

"Veterans' affairs	\$1,410,580	\$455,398	\$1,865,978"
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Page 1, replace lines 15 through 17 with:

"Total all funds	\$1,420,703	\$460,275	\$1,880,978
Less estimated income	0	<u>288,018</u>	<u>288,018</u>
Total general fund	\$1,420,703	\$172,257	\$1,592,960"

Page 1, replace line 23 with:

"Website	\$15,000	\$10,000"
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Page 2, replace line 2 with:

"Service dogs	50,000	50,000"
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Page 2, replace line 4 with:

"Total general fund	\$395,000	\$60,000"
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Page 2, remove lines 9 through 13

Re-number accordingly

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT:

House Bill No. 1025 - Department of Veterans' Affairs - Senate Action

	Base Budget	House Version	Senate Changes	Senate Version
Veterans' Affairs	\$1,410,580	\$1,752,651	\$113,327	\$1,865,978
Accrued leave payments	10,123			
Transport Vans		15,000		15,000
Total all funds	\$1,420,703	\$1,767,651	\$113,327	\$1,880,978
Less estimated income	0	284,453	3,565	288,018
General fund	\$1,420,703	\$1,483,198	\$109,762	\$1,592,960
FTE	8.00	9.00	0.00	9.00

Department No. 321 - Department of Veterans' Affairs - Detail of Senate Changes

	Adjusts Funding for Health Insurance Premium Increases ¹	Adds Funding for Targeted Market Equity ²	Increases Funding for Stand Down Events ³	Adds One-Time Funding for Website Upgrade ⁴	Adds One-Time Funding for Service Dogs ⁵	Total Senate Changes
Veterans' Affairs	(\$6,773)	\$55,100	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$50,000	\$113,327
Accrued leave payments						
Transport Vans						
Total all funds	(\$6,773)	\$55,100	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$50,000	\$113,327

Less estimated income	3,565	0	0	0	0	3,565
General fund	(\$10,338)	\$55,100	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$50,000	\$109,762
FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

¹ Funding for employee health insurance premiums is adjusted to reflect the revised premium estimate of \$1,130.22 per month.

² Funding is provided for targeted equity salary funding.

³ Funding is increased by \$5,000 for stand down events to provide a total of \$20,000.

⁴ One-time funding is provided to complete an upgrade to the agency website.

⁵ One-time funding is added for service dog training to provide service dogs to veterans with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).