



**VETERANS GUARDIAN**  
VA CLAIM CONSULTING

The Honorable Aric Putnam, Chair  
Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee  
Minnesota State Senate  
75 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Blvd  
St Paul, Minnesota 55155

April 2, 2025

Dear Chairman Goodwin and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Veterans Guardian VA Claim Consulting LLC (Veterans Guardian), the largest Veteran-owned and operated Veteran disability benefits company in the country, we write in support of Minnesota SF 1894 as currently written.

MN SF 1894 as currently written would preserve the rights of a Veteran to choose how they pursue their own US Department of Veterans' Affairs disability claim and address the full spectrum of the issues at hand. This bill provides additional oversight and protections for the Veteran while preserving their Constitutional rights to petition their government in a manner they see fit, and ensuring Veterans have access to diverse options and effective solutions for decades to come.

Veterans Guardian is a private Veteran disability claim consulting company owned and operated by Veterans, spouses of veterans, and spouses of active-duty service members. We fully support the goal of ensuring Veterans have access to a diverse set of options to help them secure the benefits they have earned. We proudly serve more than 45,000 Veterans annually. We assist Veterans with receiving the disability benefits they have earned through their honorable service, achieving a success rate of greater than 90%, in an average of 85 days. This is far below the Veterans Administration average processing time of 150 days.

Trapping Veterans in a backlogged appeals system only benefiting a handful of attorneys is something Veterans Guardian aims to avoid by focusing on getting claims done correctly the first time. The current US Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) disability benefits system is at best cumbersome and adversarial, and at worst broken to a point where it harms the Veterans for the benefit of a small number of powerful boutique law firms. In fact, in recent US Congressional testimony, Kenneth Arnold, Acting Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals testified under oath:

**"The [VA] courts clerk annually approved 6,500 to 7,300 attorney fee requests each year, almost all for remanded cases. This generates \$45 to \$50 million in attorney's fees each year, with the majority going to a small number of boutique law firms with relatively few Veterans receiving any increase in their monthly compensation."**

If passed, MN SF 1894 will help alleviate the problems with the current system and could help decrease the ever-growing backlog of claims processed through VSOs and perversely incentivized attorneys. MN SF 1894 secures the opportunity of Veterans to seek expert help with a wide variety of claims and could help them avoid the Veterans Administration appeals trap.

There is momentum building at the federal level in the United States Congress to reform the accreditation process for third party actors, like Veterans Guardian, that help Veterans achieve the full disability benefits they have earned. There are more than 18 million veterans in America, but only 5 million have a disability rating. While actors such as VSOs and law firms also serve veterans, more options, not less, are needed to effectively meet the demand of American Veterans.

The demand for current services in this space is far too vast for the government and VSOs to handle on their own. This highlights the need for an enhanced system that provides an expanded pathway for accreditation at the federal level and enhanced oversight against bad practices at the state level – MN SF 1894 as currently written does just that!

Veterans Guardian would be unable to support SF 1894 if a requirement for accreditation is added to this legislation, but as currently written, Veterans Guardian stands in support of SF 1894.

I would encourage your staff to contact me at [Brian.Johnson@vetsguardian.com](mailto:Brian.Johnson@vetsguardian.com) to set up a meeting to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,



Brian M. Johnson  
Executive Vice President, Government & Public Affairs  
Washington, DC Office





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April 2, 2025

Dear Chairman Putnam and Members of the Committee,

As one of the founding members of United Veteran Benefits Agency, LLC a majority-Veteran owned and operated organization, I am writing in support of Minnesota SF 1894 as currently written.

MN SF 1894 as we see it provides Veterans the opportunity to choose who they receive support from when pursuing their US Department of Veterans' Affairs disability claims. It encompasses all aspects of the Veterans right to choose, keeping in-tact their first amendment rights, while also including oversight and protection, important for Veterans and civilians alike.

United Veteran Benefits Agency LLC, as I mentioned above, is a Veteran owned and operated organization. Our staff is comprised 100% of Veterans, Veteran spouses and family, and spouses and family members of active-duty service members who understand the medical and mental health difficulties Veterans live with and the complexities of the VA disability process. We have a success rate of 90%, which means fewer appeals bogging down the system. Our goal is to do it right the first time, keeping the process moving through the VA system efficiently, preventing appeals and providing the Veteran with the benefits they have earned in a timely fashion. Passing MN SF 1894 will help alleviate some of the backlog that occurs within the VA system and as stated before, continue to allow Veterans a choice in how they pursue their VA disability claims.

As a consulting firm, our goal is to assist every Veteran who comes to us requesting help in a manner that is tailored to them and their family. We ensure the Veterans we work with understand their options including free services. And, if they choose to go in that direction, but aren't sure where to go, we help provide them with the service that is nearest to them. Since the inception of our business, we have served over 3500 Veterans. Many of them have called us crying from joy and relief after receiving their new VA disability rating stating they've been trying to navigate the system for months with no success. Others have written to us stating we "changed their lives".

As we see it, MN SF 1894 as currently written with the A2 DE empowers veterans a choice, but would be unable to support this legislation if requirements for accreditation is added back in.

At United Veteran Benefits Agency LLC, we appreciate that SF 1894 supports the Veteran's needs, and we would like to thank you for your time and effort and the opportunity to share our thoughts with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Connie Jones". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Connie" and last name "Jones" written in a single continuous line.

Connie Jones  
A Founding and Managing Member



## Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Tony D. Cardwell  
*President*

Dale E. Bogart, Jr.  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

April 2, 2025

The Honorable Aric Putnam, Chair  
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Dear Chairman Putnam and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of The Teamsters Rail Conference, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWED-IBT), and our Veteran members in Minnesota, I write today to **SUPPORT Minnesota SF 1894 as currently written.**

The BMWED-IBT is proud to offer and encourage private expert support to our Veteran members. Our members are armed with all the information available to them and appreciate the ability to make the best choice for them and their families. We have been working closely with Veterans Guardian to educate our members on the full range of options available free of charge and for a fee. We are proud to ensure that our Minnesota Veteran members and brothers and sisters nationwide are well-informed and choose the best options for them.

As a Veteran myself and the Director of Government Affairs for the BMWED-IBT, I used Veterans Guardian to help me achieve an increase in my rating. Unfortunately, years of navigating the complicated Veterans Affairs process frustrated me. I tried the free services offered by Veteran Service Organizations, but while well-intentioned, they failed to meet my needs. Free doesn't always mean better, and I have the choice to decide who helps me with my claim.

Minnesota SF 1894 as currently written is a commonsense consumer protection bill to ensure our member Veterans are not taken advantage of by bad actors and nefarious practices.

Minnesota Veterans deserve a choice, and the BMWED members in Minnesota deserve the option to use companies like Veterans Guardian – while being safeguarded from true claim sharks. While we support SF 1894 as currently written, we would be unable to support this legislation if requiring accreditation is added to this legislation.

This bill is trying to accomplish a noble effort and preserves the options for the hard-working, dedicated brothers and sisters of the BMWED-IBT. I strongly urge you to vote in support of Minnesota SF 1894 as currently written.

Sincerely,

Jeff Joines  
Director of Government Affairs



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Dear Chairman Putnam and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Purple Heart Homes (PHH), a North Carolina-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to serving Veterans across the nation, we are writing to express our strong support for Minnesota SF 1894 as currently written. This bill is crucial in safeguarding Minnesota's Veterans and their families, ensuring they have access to high-quality, transparent assistance when navigating the often-complex process of securing Veterans' benefits.

Purple Heart Homes was founded in 2008 by Veterans John Gallina and the late Dale Beatty, both of whom served together in Iraq and returned with life-altering injuries. Inspired by the unwavering support of their community, they established PHH to honor fellow Veterans. Today, PHH provides housing solutions to service-connected, disabled, and aging Veterans of all eras across the United States, reflecting our core commitment to supporting Veterans and their rights.

We wholeheartedly endorse the requirements outlined in this bill, given that accreditation is not required. Purple Heart Homes would be unable to support this legislation if accreditation is added back into the requirements of this legislation.

PHH supports Veterans' rights to choose reliable and expert assistance, whether through private entities or traditional Veterans Service Organizations. Veterans deserve the freedom to access the support they need without undue restriction or compromise.

We strongly urge the Minnesota Legislature to pass this bill and remain available to assist in any way necessary to ensure Minnesota's Veterans receive the highest standard of care and service.

Thank you for your dedication to Minnesota's Veterans.

Paul Cockerham  
Chief Development Officer  
Purple Heart Homes



BLACK VETERANS EMPOWERMENT COUNCIL INC.

909 Rose Ave. Suite 400 North Bethesda, Maryland 20852

[www.bvecinc.org](http://www.bvecinc.org)

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Dear Chairman Putnam and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Black Veterans Empowerment Council (BVEC), one of the Nation's largest Black Veterans groups, I am writing to express our strong support for Minnesota SF 1894 as currently written. This bill aims to establish critical protections for Minnesota's Veterans and their families, ensuring they receive high-quality, transparent assistance when seeking Veterans' benefits.

BVEC recognizes the importance of clear regulatory standards for organizations and individuals offering Veterans' benefits services. These provisions are fundamental to preserving the integrity of Veterans' services across the state. While BVEC supports this legislation as currently written, BVEC would be unable to support this if an accreditation requirement is added into the bill.

We appreciate your consideration of this important legislation and urge the Minnesota Legislature to support its passage. BVEC stands ready to assist in any way possible to ensure that Minnesota's Veterans have access to the highest standard of benefits services. Thank you for your commitment to Minnesota's Veterans.

Sincerely,

Shawn L. Deadwiler  
Chairman of the Board and President