



VETERANS GUARDIAN
VA CLAIM CONSULTING

Statement of Lt. Col. William “Bill” Taylor (Ret., US Army)

Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer

Veterans Guardian VA Claim Consulting, LLC

Before the

Kansas State House Veterans and Military Committee

Oral Testimony in Support of 2025 HB 2214

February 6, 2025

I. Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony expressing Veterans Guardian’s views on several important pieces of legislation, specifically KS HB 2214 which we strongly endorse.

My name is William Taylor and I am a co-founder of Veterans Guardian VA Claim Consulting, and a Veteran of the US Army. I am a proud graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and retired in 2018 as a Lieutenant Colonel after a 23-year career that included six deployments to Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Balkans, and positions from the platoon to 4-star level staff positions. I am proud to have founded one of the largest Veteran owned and operated companies assisting my fellow Veterans with their disability claims.

In 2015, as I was considering retiring from the Army, one of the questions that came up was VA disability benefits. I knew little more than that they existed and, like so many in the military, I had heard horror stories about how cumbersome and complicated the process was, but I felt healthy and assumed I probably did not qualify, which I now know was wrong. Information about claiming VA disability benefits was practically non-existent and difficult to find. Worse still, getting an appointment with a claims representative was even more difficult due to limited operating hours and limited capacity for the large military population in and around Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Despite being a senior officer, and having knowledgeable friends and colleagues, it took a significant amount of their support, advice, and my own research for me to successfully navigate the system and submit my own claim.

Unfortunately, I am the exception and not the norm. That is why we founded Veterans Guardian. If I, as a senior officer, had this much trouble navigating the system, something surely was not right. Unfortunately, the VA disability process is a bureaucratic and difficult system to navigate that presents challenges to most Veterans, often resulting in deserving Veterans not receiving the benefits to which they are entitled. I am proud of the work my company has done to assist Veterans with this process.

Veterans Guardian employs a staff of more than 75% Veterans, spouses of Veterans, spouses of active-duty service members or immediate family members of veterans. We have been recognized by the Department of Labor by receiving the HIRE Vets platinum or gold award four years in a row. We have received the BBB Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics in 2020, 2021, and 2022. We were most recently recognized for hiring veterans and spouses and named a Military Friendly Company of the year. We are the national presenting sponsor for Irreverent Warriors and support more than

60 national and local charities, including support to local chapters of many of the organizations that have also been invited to engage in this important discussion today.

II. Support for KS HB 2214

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 Kansas House Bill 2214.

KS HB 2214 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.

KS HB 2214 provides common-sense straight forward protections for Veterans such as:

- Mandating any fees are purely contingent upon a successful outcome and are not to exceed 5x the monthly increase;
- Prohibiting any initial or non-refundable fees;
- Mandating that presumptive period Veterans be referred to a VSO of their choice;
- Getting written confirmation from the Veteran they have been informed of their free options;
- Prohibiting private companies from having doctors on the payroll performing secondary medical exams;
- Prohibiting the use of international call centers or data centers for processing Veteran's personal information.
- Prohibiting aggressive and direct solicitation;
- Prohibiting advertising or guaranteeing a successful outcome.

No one should be opposed to protecting our Veterans from bad practices while preserving their freedoms to choose a private company as KS HB 2214 does.

I strongly urge your support of this bill.

III. Conclusion

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 and enhanced oversight.

We encourage you to support and pass HB 2214 which enacts common sense reforms to protect Veterans in Kansas.

Thank you for allowing me to present to you, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.