

Oral proponent testimony before the
Veterans/Military Committee

On

HB 2761 Prohibiting certain conduct and improper collection of veterans benefits and fees.

By

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Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on HB 2761. The intent of HB 2761 is to prevent individuals or a company that charges fees to “assist” or “consult” a veteran with filing their benefit claim. These individuals are referred to as “Claim Sharks”. This practice is illegal. These individuals or companies are not Veterans Administration accredited, they are not required to follow the established professional and ethical standards of VA accreditation, their advice can be misleading and fraudulent. Too often when veterans seek the help for filing claims of unaccredited individuals the fees that are charged are excessive and hidden from the veteran seeking help to file.

Some of the unethical practices used include:

Promising or guaranteeing an increased disability rating or percentage increase.

Advertising expedited VA claims decisions.

Requesting login credentials to access a veteran’s personal information through secure VA websites like ebenefits or VA.org.

Using confusing tactics or ambiguous language to mislead claimants or coerce them into signing a contract.

Telling veterans to forego VA exams and offering health consultations within their own network of doctors.

There has been an increase in the number of Claim Sharks. It has been estimated that in 2017 there were a small number of individuals illegally charging fees to a few hundred veterans. Four years later it was reported that 250,000 veterans were being taken advantage of by Claim Sharks. One company Trajector had 1300 employees, in 2023 they added another 500 employees.

HB 2761 will help protect the veterans of Kansas from being taken advantage of by unethical and unprofessional Claim Sharks. Your support of HB 2761 is appreciated.