South Dakota Legislature

State Capitol, 500 East Capitol, Pierre, South Dakota 57501-5070

Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations
Representative Justin Cronin, Chair
Senator Deb Peters, Vice Chair

March 31, 2015

Mr. Larry Zimmerman, Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
425 E. Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Letter of Intent Regarding Legislation Approved in the 2015 Session

Dear Secretary Zimmerman:

This Letter of Intent sets forth a particular view held by the Joint Committee on Appropriations in approving your appropriation in the 2015 Legislative Session. As such, it supplements that appropriation with a specific policy guideline as approved on March 30, 2015.

While the guideline does not have the direct force of statutory law, it rests solidly on a long-standing tradition of Legislative-Executive relationships in South Dakota and it will be used by the Joint Committee as one basis for the fiscal oversight of your agency and its continued funding.

The 2015 South Dakota Legislature approved up to and not exceeding $45,000 in other fund authority to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the purpose of providing funding to reimburse local chapters of a congressionally chartered veterans organization for furnishing honor guard detail at the funeral of deceased veterans.

It is the intent of the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations that the state will pay a sum not to exceed fifty dollars to the local chapter of a congressionally chartered veterans organization, each time the local chapter provides an honor guard detail at the funeral of a deceased veteran.

Claims will be based on the certification of the funeral director and the congressionally chartered veterans organization honor guard commander or leader.

The following three conditions must be met and certified prior to the reimbursement:

1. The honor guard services were performed on July 1, 2015 or after;
2. The congressionally chartered veterans organization honor guard policies and procedures were not able to be met due to an absence of a representative of the branch of the service of the deceased; and
3. The local chapter of the congressionally chartered veterans organization honor guard was not reimbursed from any other funding source for the same services provided.

All expenses must be approved and certified by the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) on forms provided by the DVA. The forms must be forwarded to the DVA and the DVA will request quarterly reimbursement claims from the State Auditor's Office.

In addition, it is the intent of the Joint Committee on Appropriations that the Department of Veterans Affairs will use funds from the State Veterans Home Operating Fund which will be back-filled during the 2016 Legislative Session. The Joint Committee on Appropriations will consider ongoing funds needed for FY2017 during the 2016 Legislative Session.

The Department of Veterans Affairs must provide quarterly status reports to the Joint Committee on Appropriations to update the committee on the following: 1) the number of funerals reimbursed by the Department of Defense, 2) the number of funerals reimbursed through the procedures outlined in this Letter of Intent, and 3) the number of funerals where the organization did not request a reimbursement for the honor guard service.

Thank you for your cooperation.

/ S / Representative Justin Cronin

Representative Justin Cronin
Chair, Interim Joint Appropriations

/ S / Senator Deb Peters

Senator Deb Peters
Vice Chair, Interim Joint Appropriations

cc: Marty Guindon, Auditor General
Jason Dilges, Commissioner, Bureau of Finance and Management