

ERA Speech

Madam Chair and Members. My name is Kristy Janigo, and I am a prior service noncommissioned officer of the North Dakota Army National Guard, and former sergeant with the one hundred thirty second Quartermaster Company. I am an Osseo Maple Grove American Legion Post 172 member, currently serving as their chaplain and legislative liaison. I am a lay leader at Maple Grove Lutheran Church, where I am the church council vice president and an assisting minister. I hold a Ph.D. in design and sustainability from the University of Minnesota. My fulltime work is as the Policy Director for Commissioner Kevin Anderson of Hennepin County District 7.

I grew up a rural middle child of five siblings. As a teenager, I was fiercely independent and seeking adventure and that's why I joined the Army. I followed in the footsteps of my Grandpa Roland who served in the Army in Okinawa during WWII and my uncle Ron who also served in the Guard. I kept the family legacy of Army service alive in my generation.

I went to Fort Leonard Wood Missouri for combat training, just two weeks after the terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001. It felt good to do something constructive. I served six years as a 92 Whiskey, an Army ground forces support role that functions like a city water treatment plant, only on a 30-foot truck bed.

I may look different from what some picture for prior service military. The VA and partner organizations promote a campaign

called “I Am Not Invisible” to bring awareness to challenges female vets face. There is a persistent false notion of women being less than men to overcome. That is a risk to the strength of our military and our national security. “I Am Not Invisible” ...

So, I ask you today to support this bill, to allow the people of Minnesota to add the Equal Rights Amendment to our state’s constitution. If I can honorably serve with the willingness to die for God and Country, then I think I’ve earned equal rights under the law.