

P.O. Box 345
Fort Thompson, SD 57339
December 18, 2020

North Dakota State Legislators

Re: North Dakota prison sentence reform

Greetings, Ruth & colleagues:

Holidays are busy times and we appreciate the time, effort and energy you and your colleagues have (will) put forth to ensure justice and equality within your state and prison systems.

My prayers go out to inmates who were locked down due to this pandemic. Prayers go out to staff, administrators and lawmakers as well who strive to ensure safety for citizens.

As a prison tribal liaison for our Dakota Hunkpati tribal band, I see, feel and hear inmates' remorse, truth and sometimes denial-trauma in their voices, spirits and actions when I am invited to their spiritual conferences and pow-wows. I have witnessed true humbleness, sincerity and respect within these circles which have helped me on my journey. Most of all I learned powerful lessons about humanity from all walks of life. As such, I am willing to give testimony

I sincerely request you, Ruth, and your colleagues look at North Dakota's prison sentence reform proposal from all areas (including people's voices), step forward and be known **as the lawmakers who passed and initiated a prison sentence reform** which will give inmates a chance to become productive members of society. Perhaps a pilot program of selected inmates could be implemented. Most of all, I pray and hope my son Allen Rencountre is given that opportunity, as well as others.

Sincerely,

Belinda F. Joe, Dakota Hunkpati