

Testimony of Trooper Jenna Clawson Huibregtse, North Dakota Highway Patrol

Hearing Related to Tribal Police Officers

House Bill No. 1126

House Judiciary Committee

Chairman, Representative Lawrence R. Klemin

North Dakota State Capitol, Bismarck ND

January 17, 2021 – 10:00AM

Chairman Klemin and members of the Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Jenna Clawson Huibregtse. I am proud to serve the state as a Trooper in the North Dakota Highway Patrol and I serve as the department's Cultural Liaison Officer. I am here today on behalf of my agency to provide testimony in support of House Bill 1126.

In my career I have worked as a patrol trooper and at Highway Patrol headquarters. In my time with the Highway Patrol I have worked with multiple local, state, tribal, and federal agencies. Often law enforcement needs to call on other agencies for assistance or to work in collaboration for public safety. In a rural state like North Dakota, law enforcement must be able to call on neighboring agencies for assistance when the closest backup may be over an hour away. Uniformed officers, including tribal police officers, have served in this function in support of our agency on multiple occasions. However, a lack of clarified language in North Dakota Century Code can hinder the ability for agency-to-agency assistance.

While on routine patrol, uniformed officers including the Highway Patrol, Sheriff's Office, and Tribal police officers, encounter situations where they are required to act in order to preserve public safety and the security of North Dakota citizens. The changes outlined in House Bill 1126 will update the North Dakota Century Code and clarify the authority of tribal police officers to assist local law enforcement officers and respond to emergencies on and near the exterior boundaries of tribal lands.

This bill does not expand arrest authority, instead it ensures our tribal law enforcement partners are covered in the event of an emergency or when a request for assistance is broadcast by another officer.

North Dakota shares geography with 5 tribal nations. At tribal nations, there are approximately 30 tribal police officers working who call North Dakota home. Making these changes to Century Code will allow law enforcement in different jurisdictional boundaries to more seamlessly assist one another in times of need and respond to emergencies. These additions will also assist in tribal and state relationships and collaborative law enforcement efforts. This bill clarifies authority while respecting jurisdictional boundaries.

HB 1126 is good for law enforcement and most importantly good for public safety and North Dakota citizens.

This concludes my testimony and I am happy to answer any questions.

Thank you, Chairman and members of the Committee.