

**House Judiciary Committee
Lawrence Klemin, Chairman**

Testimony in Favor of HB 1443--Bias Crimes

Representative Mary Schneider-District 21

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Every year, thousands of violent bias crimes occur, affecting not only the victims and their families, but the entire communities they target. HB 1443 would add comprehensive, fully-inclusive bias crime protections to North Dakota law for the first time, sending a strong message that hatred and prejudice are not North Dakota values, and that everyone is welcome here and should be able to live their lives free from the threat of bias-motivated crimes. This bill is both needed and timely.

According to the [most recent FBI hate crimes statistics \(2019\)](#), hate crimes in the U.S. [rose](#) to the highest level in more than a decade.

Hate-motivated killings in 2019 also reached the highest level recorded by the FBI.

Anti-transgender hate crimes rose 20% in 2019 over the year prior.

However, these numbers represent only a fraction of bias-motivated incidents. Reporting hate crimes to the FBI is purely voluntary, and [less than 15%](#) of law enforcement agencies in the country reported hate crimes data to the FBI in 2019. Since we don't have a hate crimes statute in North Dakota, it's not clear that all jurisdictions here accurately report or have clear directives on what should be reported.

HB 1443 would require local law enforcement to be trained on recognizing, investigating, and reporting hate crimes, and would require law enforcement agencies to report hate crime statistics to the FBI.

This data is important for helping advocates and law enforcement fully understand the problem and deliver targeted, effective solutions.

Even based on the limited data available, reported hate crimes increased by 80% from 2018 to 2019 in North Dakota. (10 incidents were reported statewide to the FBI in [2018](#) and 18 incidents were reported statewide in [2019](#).)

Proponents of this bill have been talking to law enforcement about the training adjustments and other minor changes needed to gain their universal support. I want the committee to know we can bring you amendments quickly and that those may lower the training costs and fiscal note.