

Chairman Klein and Members of the Senate Industry, Business, and Labor Committee,

My name is Ashley Eagle, and I am a resident of Grand Forks, North Dakota. I urge you to issue a "do pass" on HB1442.

This legislation would protect North Dakota renters from excessive late fees and has the potential to keep people housed both during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This legislation is important to me because I understand how limited housing choice can be in our most rural communities. In some places, one or two companies/people can have a complete monopoly of the rental industry in the area, and consumers do not have much to choose from when renting. This monopoly allows landlords in the area to set their late fees as high as they may please, and consumers living in the area have no choice but to comply – it is not like they can take their business elsewhere. This can result in astronomical fees, with some landlords even charging by the day.

Some people may not be able to ever catch up on what they owe if they are in a tight financial situation because of the pandemic and the snowball effect of these excessive fees. This may very well result in their getting evicted. Getting evicted stays on your record and can prevent someone from qualifying for housing assistance in the future, leading to homelessness. North Dakota residents deserve better. Please issue a do pass on HB1442.