



# NORTH DAKOTA

## *Family Alliance* LEGISLATIVE ACTION

### Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 1533

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Good morning Madam Chair Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. My name is Mark Jorritsma and I am the Executive Director of North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action. We are here today to testify in support of House Bill 1533 and ask that you issue a “DO PASS” out of committee.

North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action supports the intent of this bill for a number of reasons. First, there are actual cases of domestic abuse victims being subjected to abusive litigation right here in North Dakota. In other words, while it is frequently the case that the legislature is hesitant to implement laws for situations that do not already exist, this is not one of those cases and cannot be rejected on that basis.

Second, our organization is a staunch supporter of protecting victims of domestic abuse, from both a faith and societal basis. While we understand that situations like this can sometimes be very complex, we will side with the victim and, unfortunately too often, the children that get caught up in these situations. These individuals need a fresh start to their lives and this bill would help facilitate that. As long as abusive litigation continues, their lives are put on hold and they continue to suffer with the memories of the abuse they were trying to escape.

Finally, there is the matter of the court system. Our court system in North Dakota, like many other states, is continually running at full speed and nevertheless has a significant backlog of critical cases. The point of this bill is that abusive litigation does not fall into the category of “critical cases” by its very definition. It further clogs our court system for all the wrong reasons.

While there is always the possibility of laws going too far and actually creating an unfair situation for fathers, we believe that what this bill seeks to do greatly outweighs that small likelihood. For these reasons, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action requests that you render a “DO PASS” on House Bill 1533. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I am happy to stand for any questions.