

North Dakota Ethics Commission Report

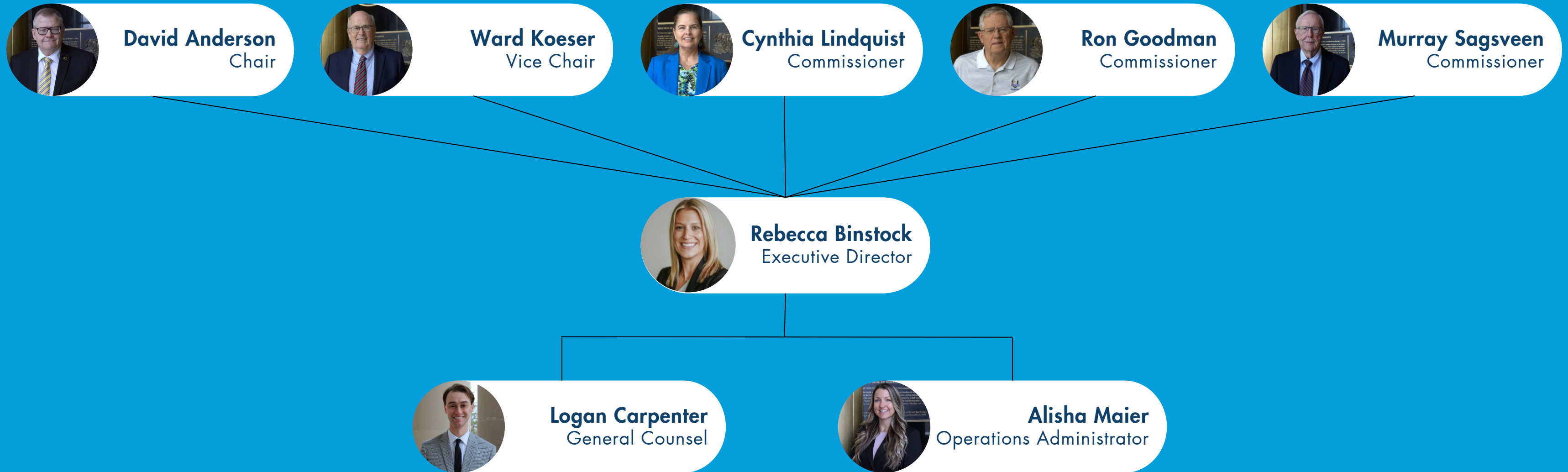
Testimony presented by
Executive Director Rebecca Binstock
House Appropriations - Education & Environment
Division

March 13, 2025



ND | ETHICS
COMMISSION

Organizational Chart



Strategic Initiatives

To fulfill its constitutional duties and meet its mission, the Commission has adopted five (5) strategic initiatives.

- 1. Education & Outreach**
- 2. Relationships & Communication**
- 3. Rules Review & Creation**
- 4. Positive Work Culture**
- 5. Meaningful Enforcement**

**A Historical
Exploration of
Ethical Conflicts**



**A Practical
Application of
Conflict Rules**



**Navigating the
Complaint Process**



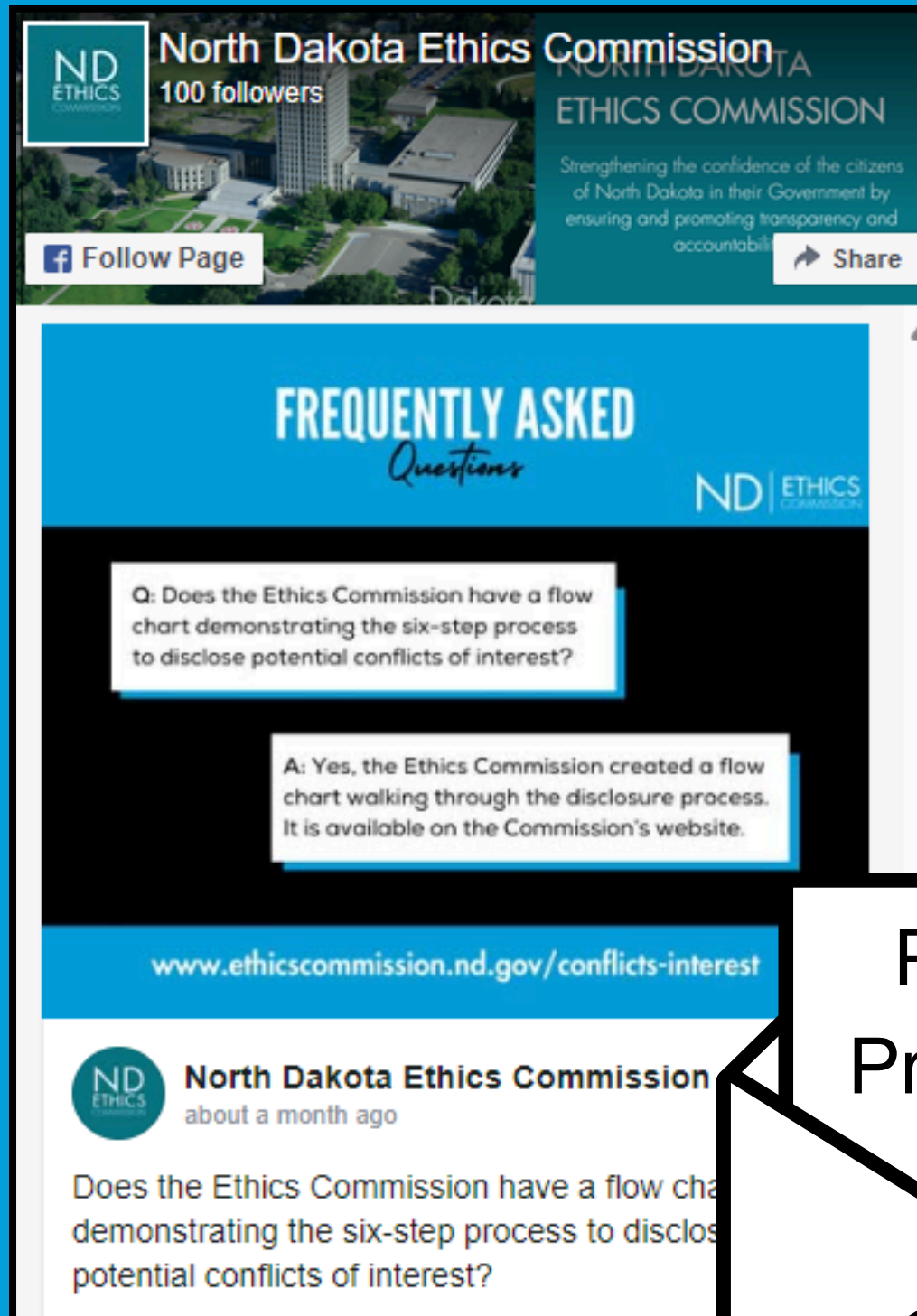
**Lobbyist Gifting,
Naughty or Nice?**



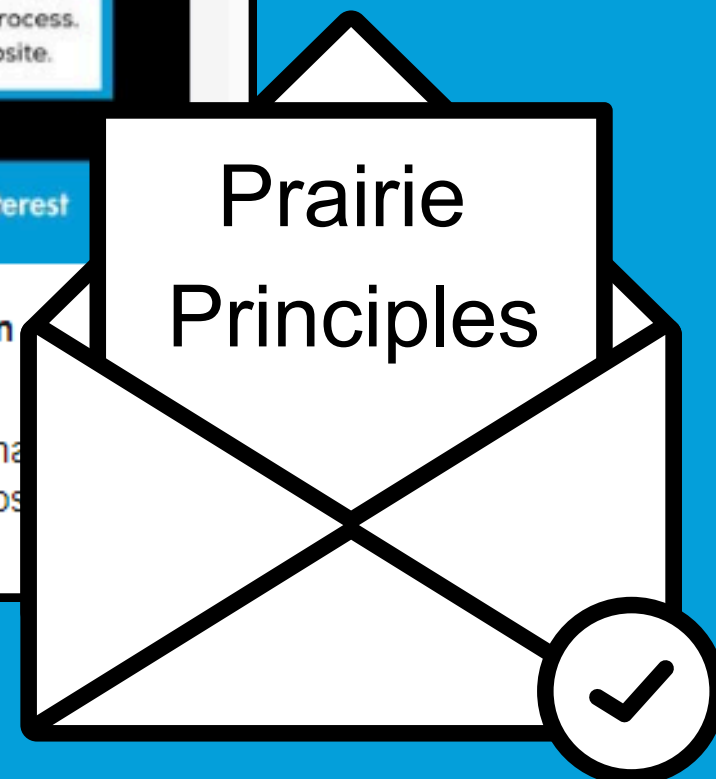
**28
Education Sessions
1,000
North Dakotans**



Relationships & Communication

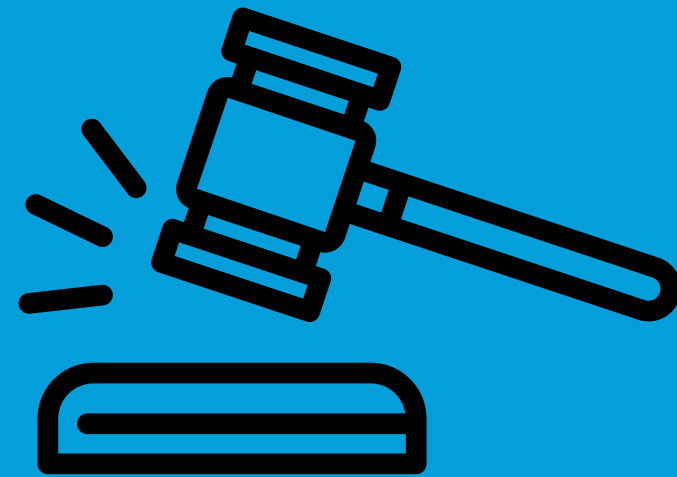
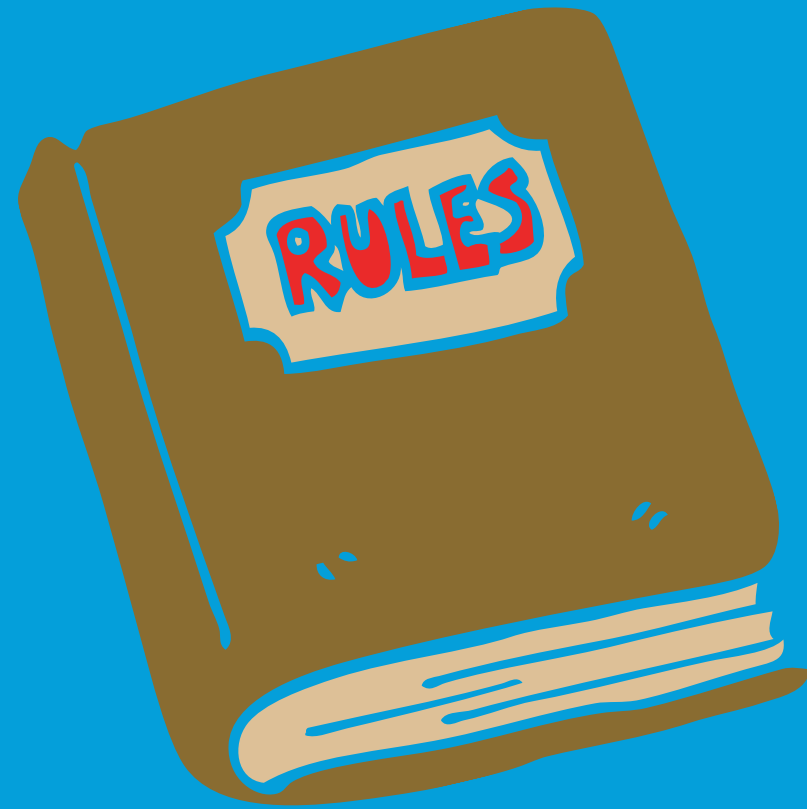


Who? **HAVE QUESTIONS** *Why?*
Where? **ABOUT THE**
ETHICS COMMISSION? *What?*
See our FAQs!



Quarterly Newsletter
Distribution Lists
Facebook & YouTube
Website Overhaul

Rules Review & Creation



The Complaint Process

Lobbyist Gifts

Appearance of Bias

Conflicts of Interest

Positive Work Culture



Community Engagement

Staff positions filled from quality applicant pools

Executive Assistant ➡ Operations Administrator



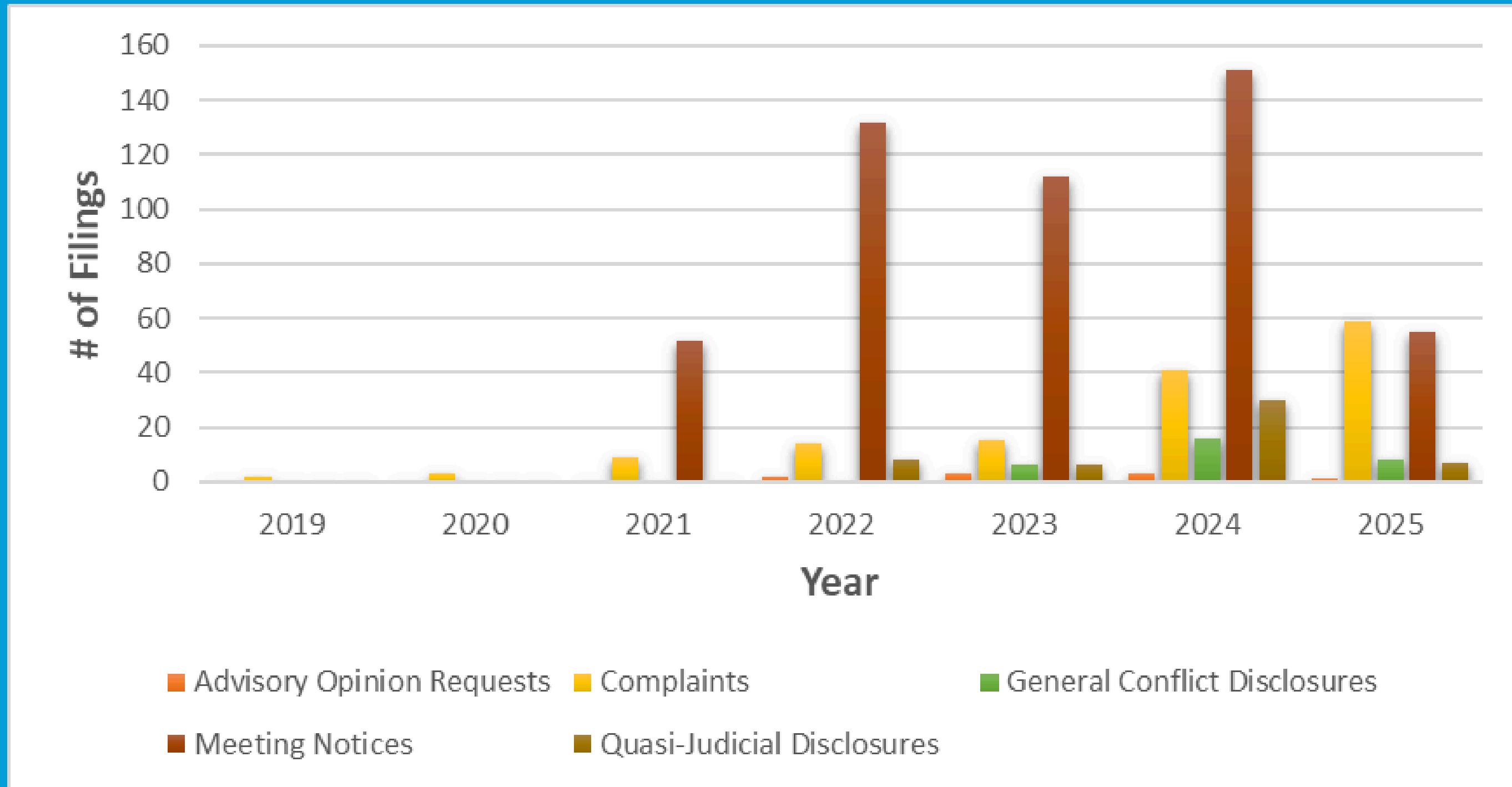
Strong applicants to serve as commissioners

UND Law Legislative Intern

No vacant positions



Activity Levels



(as of March 10, 2025)

Activity Levels

| Level of Activity - Statistical Data | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|------|---|------|---|------|---|------|---|------|---|------|---|------|---|-------|---|
| | ▼ | 2019 | ▼ | 2020 | ▼ | 2021 | ▼ | 2022 | ▼ | 2023 | ▼ | 2024 | ▼ | 2025 | ▼ | Total | ▼ |
| Advisory Opinion Requests | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 2 | | 3 | | 3 | | 1 | | 9 | |
| Complaints | | 2 | | 3 | | 9 | | 14 | | 15 | | 41 | | 59 | | 143 | |
| General Conflict Disclosures | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 6 | | 16 | | 8 | | 30 | |
| Meeting Notices | | 0 | | 0 | | 52 | | 132 | | 112 | | 151 | | 55 | | 502 | |
| Quasi-Judicial Disclosures | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 8 | | 6 | | 30 | | 7 | | 51 | |
| Totals | | 2 | | 3 | | 61 | | 156 | | 142 | | 241 | | 130 | | 735 | |
| Meetings | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Public Administrative Hearings | | 0 | | 2 | | 1 | | 2 | | 0 | | 2 | | 0 | | 7 | |
| Regular Meetings | | 3 | | 10 | | 8 | | 12 | | 10 | | 12 | | 2 | | 57 | |
| Special Meetings | | 2 | | 0 | | 0 | | 5 | | 12 | | 3 | | 2 | | 24 | |
| Total All Meetings | | 5 | | 12 | | 9 | | 19 | | 22 | | 17 | | 4 | | 88 | |

(as of March 10, 2025)

Complaint Resolutions

| Year | Total Complaints Received | Summarily Dismissed | | Informally Resolved | | Pending | |
|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 2019 | 2 | 2 | 100% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| 2020 | 3 | 3 | 100% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| 2021 | 9 | 9 | 100% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| 2022 | 14 | 5 | 36% | 1 | 7% | 8 | 57% |
| 2023 | 15 | 11 | 73% | 1 | 7% | 3 | 20% |
| 2024 | 41 | 22 | 54% | 0 | 0% | 19 | 46% |
| 2025 | 59 | 3 | 5% | 0 | 0% | 56 | 95% |
| Totals | 143 | 55 | 38% | 2 | 1% | 86 | 60% |

Note: This table categorizes resolution by the year in which the complaint was filed and does not necessarily reflect the year in which the resolution occurred. Data as of March 10, 2025.

2023-2025 Budget Overview

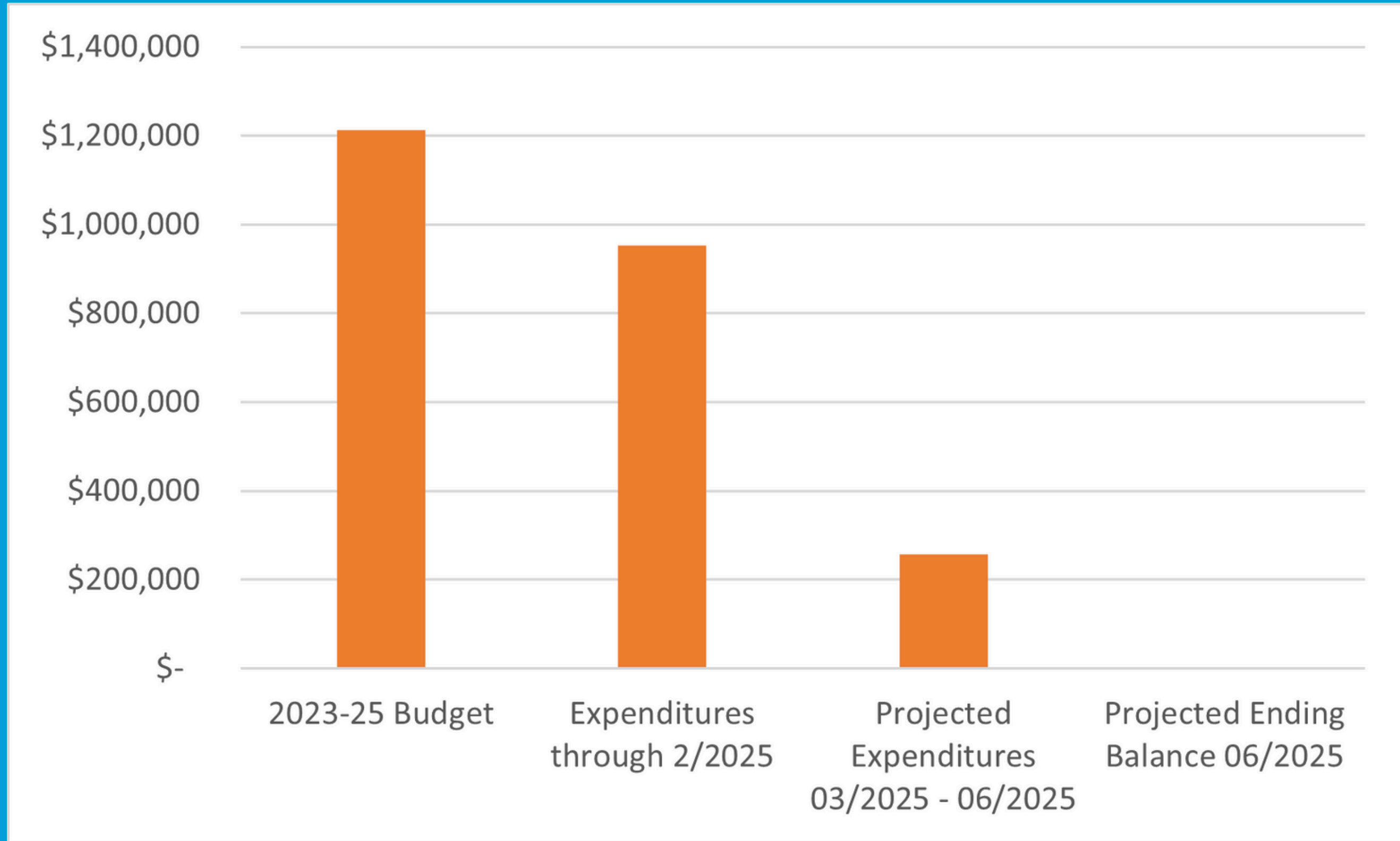
- **2023-2025 Legislative Appropriation (SB 2024) = \$1,138,242**

Additional Appropriations:

- FTE Funding Pool (SB 2015 Section 22) = + \$60,798
- Employer Retirement Contribution Pool (SB 2015 Section 23) = + \$1,957
- State Government Student Internship Program Spending Authority = + \$12,472

-
- **2023-2025 Available Appropriations = \$1,213,489**

2023 - 2025 Budget Status



2025-2027 Budget Request

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| • OMB Adjusted Base Budget = | \$1,121,994 |
| ▪ Education & Communications Administrator | + \$278,922 |
| ▪ Case Management System | + \$195,000 (\$50,000) |
| ▪ Rules Implementation | + \$50,000 |
| ▪ Additional Professional Fees | + \$50,000 |
| ▪ Commissioner and Temporary Salaries | + \$43,403 |
| ▪ Workload Increases | + \$32,542 |
| ▪ Additional IT Software and Subscriptions | + \$19,151 |
| ▪ Increased Travel Expenses | + \$7,760 |
| ▪ Furniture | + \$2,348 |
| <hr/> | |
| • 2025 - 2027 Appropriations Request = | \$1,801,120 |

*****Total in white passed by Senate*****

Education & Communication Administrator

FTE position will develop & implement the Commission's
preventative, educational initiatives.

Passed by Senate

- Salary = **\$184,320**
- Benefits = **\$ 78,312**
- IT Costs = **\$ 10,979**
- Office Equipment = **\$ 2,599**
- Travel = **\$ 2,712**

Total: + \$278,922

Case Management System

Due to steadily increasing filings, file and case management need to be automated and managed through a platform.

\$50,000 passed by Senate

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| • One-Time Funding = | \$135,000 | Total: + \$195,000 |
| • Ongoing Maintenance = | \$ 60,000 | |

Rules Implementation Costs

For the Commission, rules are adopted pursuant to its independent, constitutional authority.

There is currently no funds to implement rules beyond publication of notices, but they likely will be needed in the future as the Commission adopts rules.

*** Funds earmarked for this purpose only. ***

Total: + \$50,000

Commissioner & Temporary Salaries

Beginning in 2025, the Commission will collaborate with the UND School of Law to hire summer and legislative legal interns.

Passed by Senate

- Intern Pay = \$ 28,484
- Overtime Compensation = \$ 4,778
- Commissioner Salary = \$ 10,141

Total + \$43,403

Workload Increases

- Commission identified an additional **\$20,208** in salaries and **\$4,226** in fringe benefits to cover a salary increase for the operations administrator as a result of workload increases.
- Commission has identified an additional **\$6,762** in salaries and **\$1,346** in fringe benefits to cover a salary increase for the executive director as a result of workload increases.

+ Total: \$32,542



*Thank
you!*

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or

701.328.5325

ND | **ETHICS**
COMMISSION