

Good morning, Chairman Schauer and committee members. For the record, Mike Motschenbacher from District 47 representing Northwest Bismarck.

Today I present to you HB 1170. The purpose behind the bill is simply to give state agencies a little more leeway and negotiating power when hiring new employees.

As someone who has worked and managed two businesses in the private sector for 34 years, I had the ability to negotiate whatever I wanted when hiring new employees including wages, benefits, and vacation time. Although I had the same struggles finding and hiring employees that everyone else did, our state agencies do not have the same negotiating ability that we do in the private sector. Many of the standards are set by us, the legislature. This bill is an attempt to relax some of those standards, especially in the field of paid leave.

In front of you, you have two sheets. The one that is printed front and back is the language that is currently drafted. The two pager that you have are suggested edits. These edits come from further conversations that I've had with state agencies on the proper and best way to address the issue.

With legislative council being bogged down currently and with the short timeline I had to get this edited draft in front of you, we drafted the amendments ourselves and would ask the committee to approve this bill with these amendments.

A quick review of the bill. I'm going to be going off the edited version if you want to follow along.

On page 1 line 7, it changes the word "persons" to "individuals". The reason behind this is that under definition, the word "persons" could actually represent a group or organization, so we changed it to accurately represent that we mean the individual employee.

Page 1 section b is added language which changes verbiage to "new hire leave" rather than "annual leave". The reasoning behind this change is because annual leave is required to be paid out in full, even if the employee would quit within the first weeks or couple months of them being hired.

Page 1 section c is the necessary language that would give the hiring agency the ability to grant this leave. You will notice on line 20 it says "may grant" which simply allows them to do so but does not require it.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, with this brief description, I would gladly answer any questions you may have but there are people behind me that are going to testify in favor of this bill that would be able to answer your questions with better clarity, but I'll be glad to attempt to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.