

HB 1347
House Judiciary
January 28, 2025
Testimony of Jessica Throlson

Chair Klemin and members of the Judiciary Committee, for the record, my name is Jessica Throlson. I am the specialized dockets manager for the ND Court System.

In this testimony, I will be using the term “treatment courts” instead of “drug courts” to reflect the house passing HB 1030, which changes the name of drug courts to treatment courts. HB 1347 is before you today to provide a basic construct for the roles and responsibilities associated with Treatment Courts in the state of North Dakota. We currently have 14 adult and juvenile specialized dockets operating in North Dakota and have done so for approximately 25 years.

Throughout their existence, we have worked to create treatment courts/specialized dockets through a largely unstructured approach. We currently have 6 adult treatment courts that are supervised by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR), 6 juvenile courts, 1 adult treatment court in Richland County and 1 veterans treatment court in Grand Forks supervised by the court system. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has worked with us to coordinate and implement treatment required for these courts.

As these treatment courts/specialized dockets are a part of the court system, an internal structure was deemed to be necessary to “vet” the creation of treatment courts/specialized dockets. In 2019, the supreme court through its rule making authority created the Interdisciplinary Committee on Specialized Dockets through [Administrative Rule 60](#). This committee reviews requests to create specialized dockets and makes recommendations on the creation of them to the supreme court. This process works well for an internal structure to review and provide structure as well as guidance for treatment courts. However, we have no equivalent to guide all stakeholders in this process. Therefore, representatives from DOCR, DHHS and the Court System met over the last year to attempt to provide more a more thorough collaboration/coordination between the justice system stakeholders.

It is through this collaboration and coordination that HB 1347 came into being. I urge a do pass and am available for questions.

North Dakota Specialty Courts

