

**SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS DIVISION
MARCH 12, 2025
TESTIMONY OF JIM SHAW
BUREAU OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION
HOUSE BILL 1003**

Chairman Wanzek and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee Government Operations Division, my name is Jim Shaw and I am a Supervisory Special Agent for the Bureau of Criminal Investigation and oversee the Cyber Crime Unit, which consists of four groups: Computer Forensics, Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC), Human Trafficking (HT), and Victim Services. I am submitting my testimony in support of HB1003.

In 2020, the Attorney General's Office secured a grant to establish a Law Enforcement-Based Victim Specialist Program within BCI. Recognizing gaps in victim services—particularly from the time of victimization to court proceedings and the lack of resources in rural areas—BCI partnered with the North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force to bridge those gaps.

This program has been a tremendous asset to BCI and the citizens of North Dakota. Our two victim specialists cover the entire state, ensuring that victims—regardless of location—receive the care and resources they need. Their support not only improves outcomes for victims but also strengthens investigations by embedding a victim-centered approach. Additionally, they play a key role in supporting the well-being of our agents, who are often exposed to traumatic cases. Their involvement in peer support and wellness initiatives helps mitigate the impact of this difficult work, ensuring our agents remain effective and resilient.

Despite having only two specialists to serve the entire state, this program has gained recognition statewide. Prosecutors and outside agencies are increasingly reaching out for assistance, highlighting the growing demand for these services. Additionally, our specialists have been instrumental in raising awareness and expanding training efforts. They have successfully gotten BCI into schools, where they provide critical education on human trafficking, online exploitation, and victim-centered approaches to students, educators, and school resource officers. These trainings help schools recognize warning signs, improve reporting, and create safer environments for children.