



**67th Legislative Assembly, House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee
Public Hearing on House Bill 1438
February 2nd, 2021**

Good Morning, my name is Kelly Gorz and I am the Associate Director of High Plains Fair Housing Center (FHC), a private nonprofit with the mission to strengthen communities and ensure equal access to housing across North Dakota. Thank you, Chairman Lefor and the House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee for the opportunity to speak today in support of HB1438.

We, at High Plains Fair Housing Center, work across the state to make people aware of their legal rights and responsibilities under the Fair Housing Act, but I speak today on behalf of the hundreds of clients who call asking for our assistance that do not fall within the scope of housing discrimination. Nearly 50% of our intake calls year after year are landlord/tenant calls. Many of those calls are clients who are facing eviction. Most of those clients who fall below incomes that make it possible to seek legal advice are at a loss of what to do next, what their rights are, and who to turn to. They will be at a disadvantage during an eviction process without knowledge of their rights or representation. Many of them will not be able to rent decent housing again and be financially ruined or may lose their housing assistance.

We do not provide legal advice at High Plains FHC and as advocates we refer the majority of these calls to Legal Services of North Dakota who is in a position to assist persons facing eviction. We are supporters of equipping people engaging in important transactions such as housing with a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Passage of this bill will protect the rights of those most vulnerable facing eviction in North Dakota and High Plains Fair Housing Center is in full support of HB1438.

Thank you for your time.

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Nothing in this letter is legal advice, for legal advice please see an attorney.