

House Bill 1122

Mr. Chair, members of the House Judiciary Committee, good morning. My name is Jesse Jahner, and I am the elected Sheriff of Cass County, North Dakota. I have been employed by the Cass County Sheriff's Office for 22 years and was elected as Cass County Sheriff in November 2018. I want to take this time to thank Representative Shannon Roers Jones and others who have sponsored and co-sponsored this bill. I testify before you today in support of House Bill 1122 as it pertains to Reserve Officers and Reserve Officer Programs. House Bill 1122 would give authority to the North Dakota Peace Officers Standards and Training Board (POST) to have oversight over Reserve Officers and Reserve Officer Programs in the State of North Dakota.

You may be asking what is a Reserve Officer? Reserve Officers are officers who volunteer to assist agencies in a limited law enforcement capacity but have not completed a Full-Time Peace Officer Training Program required to become a Licensed Peace Officer in the State of North Dakota. Some agencies will utilize Reserve Officers to supplement their Full-Time Peace Officer Staff.

The North Dakota POST Board comprises licensed law enforcement administrators, Attorney General's Office staff, and civilian staff representing both City and County Government. Some of the POST Board duties, amongst many, are to oversee training, administrative rules, and disciplinary concerns of License Peace Officers in the State of North Dakota. The overall objective is to ensure that licensed Peace Officers receive the appropriate training to perform safe and professional Peace Officer duties.

During the last legislative session, a bill was introduced that attempted to restrict and or eliminate reserve officers' use. The concern was that Reserve Officers were not receiving the appropriate training to perform Peace Officer functions. That bill was defeated, but considering the concerns, it raised House Bill 1122 was drafted. Currently, there are no governing bodies that oversee Reserve Officers other than the head of each Law Enforcement Agency. There are no current rules or guidelines that govern Reserve Officers. As you can imagine, there is a wide variety of training amongst Reserve Officers based on each agency's ability to provide the training. By Supporting House Bill 1122, you would be supporting the moving of Reserve Officers and programs under the direction and authority of the POST Board. Having the POST Board oversight would allow standardized training, hiring processes, and disciplinary rulings consistent with a professional outcome expected by the citizens in the State of North Dakota.

In closing, I would respectfully ask the members of the committee to support House Bill 1122.

Respectfully,

Jesse Jahner