

Representative Mike Lefor

HB 1130 Testimony

Good afternoon, Chairman Klemin and members of the House Judiciary Committee, for the record my name is Mike Lefor and I represent District 37 Dickinson in the House. I bring HB 1130 to you today on behalf of the Municipal Court system in the state.

When an offender appears before a municipal judge, and is found guilty the judge may impose incarceration, fines or penalties. If the individual does not pay the fine or penalty, the judge must issue an order to show cause and often involves the issuance of warrants and possible jail sentences for non-compliance.

A considerable part of the time of a Municipal Judge is spent on efforts to collect amounts determined to be owing as fines or penalties. Some of those amounts are substantial, sometimes at least in part due to minimum fines required by legislation. The result in many cases is that the city's costs increase as they attempt to enforce judgments even though they do not always collect what is owed.

In the communities of Dickinson, Mandan, Bismarck and Rugby, the outstanding amount of fines is in excess of \$1,000,000 is outstanding. It is reasonable to assume the total amount owing across the state would be in excess of \$3,000,000. The association would like to have the option of collecting the criminal judgments to civil judgments and collection of some of those judgments would occur through the civil court system.

Since, this bill was introduced, the association has decided to provide a hog-house amendment to this bill which I have reviewed and would certainly support. With that, members of the Judiciary committee, I would respectfully request a do pass recommendation and I would stand for any questions you may have.