

**SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
SENATOR DIANE LARSON, CHAIR  
FEBRUARY 9, 2021**

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**NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION  
LISA BJERGAARD, DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF JUVENILE SERVICES  
PRESENTING TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1052**

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Chair Larson and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Lisa Bjergaard, and I am the Director of the Division of Juvenile Services for the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. I am here to testify on behalf of the department in support of House Bill 1052, which would amend North Dakota Century Code 27-20-61, which was established during the 66<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly and is effective through July 31, 2021.

In November of 2019, we achieved the first signed agreement between Spirit Lake Nation Tribal Court, the Division of Juvenile Services, the North Dakota Juvenile Court, and the Indian Affairs Commission. The purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding was to establish effective cooperation in order to provide access to similar services for all North Dakota youth who were adjudicated, whether in a tribal juvenile court or a state juvenile court.

I hope you agree that this was an historic moment. We worked across branches of government and between governments in order to share expertise and plan together for some of North Dakota's most vulnerable and at-risk youth; those involved with the juvenile justice system.

We had hoped that during the convening of this legislative session, we would be able to report to you the data we obtained, and our plans to achieve similar agreements with other North Dakota tribal partners. However, the ongoing global pandemic has impacted our ability to do this work to the depth that we had hoped to achieve.

The bill asks that you extend the life of this project for another biennium so that we can continue this important work. Therefore, I urge a “do pass”.