



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE JON NELSON,
CHAIR FEBRUARY 6th, 2023

F5 PROJECT ADAM MARTIN, FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
PRESENTING TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1015

Chairman Nelson and members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Adam Martin, and I am the CEO of F5 Project. F5 Project's mission is to help those who are incarcerated as they reenter society by meeting their needs with addiction, housing, and employment through peer support. We employ 50+ staff across North Dakota in nine cities and 7 houses in Fargo, Bismarck, and Grand Forks. I am here to testify in support of House Bill 1015.

We have been a partner of multiple agencies and departments of North Dakota over the years. The North Dakota Department of Corrections was our first partner through a program called "Free Through Recovery". Since 2018 F5 and the NDDOC have worked collaboratively between case managers in the prisons, parole, and probation, and care coordinators from F5 Project on 1,214 participants. This partnership has produced a reduction in those returning to prison and increased the quality of life for 75% of those participants. (upon request I can provide this document. I received the total survey on Friday) This means that we have seen only 75% of those who typically go back to prison within 1-3

years remain law-abiding, get into recovery, find stable housing, and secure great jobs. Most importantly, we are seeing families reunited and restored. A few things by-products of this are men and women increasing child support payments and paying on time. Taxes are being generated through employment, apartment units are getting filled, and recovery communities are adding new members.

I believe that I'm not only speaking from a partnership standpoint, but also as a person that was once incarcerated, on probation, and has been involved with multiple agencies and departments throughout North Dakota. The change I see happening is not just because of reform or using evidence-based practices. We can create all the bills and laws we want but if we don't have the right leadership, if we don't have the right directors, managers, or staff, it will all be for nothing. We cannot just mandate change or reform. The people must buy into it too. If these hearing was happening 20 years ago, or even 10 years ago, I'd say it would have been a waste of time, but today it is perfect. My experience with NDDOC from inside the prisons, probation, and parole, in the last 6 years has been by far one of the greatest partnerships I've experienced. Not just because of the outstanding numbers and outcomes these partnerships are producing, but because of the culture and experience, we have had. My experience prior to current leadership seemed like going to a hotel with "check the box" customer service. People were there to just do a job and go home. Today it seems like people feel at home while at work. Respect, courteous, fast response to emails and calls, making sure jobs get done, and not just saying "that is not in my job description. Ensuring that residents have quality opportunities and not just giving them an outdated list of landlords. I used to believe that F5 Project was the best agent of change in North Dakota, but today I believe it's F5 Project and the North Dakota Department of Corrections working seamlessly together. From prison

programs, and live-streaming inspirational speakers, to assisting probation officers in the field.

I'm here today because I believe that we have an opportunity to build something great. I believe that the NDDOCR is currently equipped to do what they are asking. North Dakota is at the forefront of creating safer communities and lowering costs through rehabilitation and partnerships. But most importantly, they have become people leading by example in leadership from top to bottom.

One last thing.

For a long time, North Dakota has been in a mental health and addiction epidemic. Now we are seeing suicide rates climb along with overdose every year. It's my belief that the NDDOCR is the one department that can change that. Most people who struggle with addiction and mental health have some kind of time with NDDOCR. From juvenile probation to being released after 30 years. I don't believe that this is a lot of money that is being asked for today. I believe it's money that has been sandbagged over the years and we are seeing the consequences of it.

Thank you, Chairman Nelson, and members of the Appropriations Committee for giving me time to share about the success of F5 and the North Dakota Department of Corrections. I am happy to answer any questions and look forward to continuing to serve North Dakota.