

Dear Chairman Klemin and members of the Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to voice my support for HB 1145. Many victims of sexual assault experience PTSD symptoms. A startling statistic is that 33% of sexual assault victims contemplate suicide. Sexually abused victims with severe PTSD are subjected to the event over and over again which results in a lifetime of trauma. Statistics also show that 86% of women incarcerated in North Dakota jails are victims of sexual assault. I do not have access to the percentage for women in mental health units across our state. Victims of sexual assaults often don't come forward because they feel that they won't be believed, "only 2% of sexual assaults are found to be false reporting." Of the sexual assault crimes that are prosecuted less than 1% result in felony convictions. The criminal justice system has historically failed survivors of sexual violence. Is North Dakota a safe place to live? We'd like to believe so, except for one dark secret "sexual assaults," which are usually swept under a rug and ignored. The current system favors the abuser. It's time to stand up for sexually abused victims. "They deserve more." This bill will give sexually assaulted victims who weren't able to face their abuser because of their mental health state caused by the assault much needed time to gain the strength to do so. I hope that you give this bill serious consideration and I urge you to give it your support. Thank you for your attention. Are there any questions? Lee Rebsom (retired) Dickinson, ND