

Dear Chairman Klemin and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak today. At the age of 18, I was sexually assaulted at 2 am by a male nurse at a hospital in Dickinson, North Dakota. A year later her sexually assaulted a 14-year-old girl at 2 am in that same hospital who had gotten a tonsillectomy. I came forward and provided a supporting statement for her case. As a result, the male nurse was charged with gross sexual imposition, sentenced to three years in prison, and got his nursing license revoked. It was not that my sexual assault was any less provable or injurious than hers, the only difference was that I was already suffering from PTSD from a prior rape at age 10 and was not well enough to stand trial within the three-year statute of limitations time frame.

Approximately one year ago, I decided to start my own journey for justice on this 29-year-old case. I was told by the Dickinson Police Department that my interview with the lead detective, Stewart Stenberg, had been destroyed and that he had retired. Every law office I called, and believe me there were a lot, stated they only keep these type of case files for approximately ten years.

After reading old newspaper articles, I realized Jim Hope was the original prosecutor of the case and that he was still working today. I spoke with Jim expecting him to tell me my police report was destroyed almost 20 years ago which is what I had been told over and over again. Instead, Jim stated he never felt good about destroying my police report and that he has the discretion to keep certain case files. Jim gave me a copy of my police report, contacted Stewart Stenberg (former lead investigator of the case) and both worked with legislators to help draft this legislation, Jim has now agreed to speak in front of you in favor of this bill. I want to give a heartfelt thank you to Jim Hope, Stewart Stenberg, Christopher Joseph, Jaclyn Hall, Jim Shaw,

CAWS North Dakota, family/friends, and all the legislators including Representative Austen Schauer, Senator Kathy Hogan, and Representative Joshua Boschee who help draft or support this legislation. Your time, effort, energy, and care to help move this bill forward has given me tremendous hope that others will not have to face similar barriers to seek justice.

The State Capitol recently completed accessibility improvements. The article stated, "People with disabilities have the same right as everybody else and that includes access." Imagine for a moment you were involved in a head on collision with a drunk driver. You survived, but were in a wheelchair unsure you would ever walk again. You want to go to court, seek justice, and you can because you have access (ramps & elevators) to assist you. But imagine for a moment there was no access to assist you. No one would ever walk up to you in your wheelchair, tell you that you have three, five, 10 or 20 years to seek physical therapy, and figure out a way to enter that building and seek justice without access.

Yet, that is how we speak to people suffering from disabling mental conditions each and every day. We put a time limit on justice for them and provide no access. This incredible legislation provides that access that people either suffering from or who will suffer a disabling mental condition as a result of a sexual assault have needed for far too long - the ability to heal before the statute of limitations clock runs out on them.

This powerful, fair, and just legislation deserves a do pass recommendation. All future North Dakotans either suffering from or who will suffer a disabling mental condition as a result of a sexual assault deserve a do pass recommendation. Most importantly, North Dakota needs to be a place not only full of immense opportunities, innovations, economic growth and development, but also a place for healing. Thank you. Questions? A [REDACTED] R [REDACTED]