

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning members of the House Judiciary Committee.

My name is Austen Schauer, representing District 13 in West Fargo, seeking your support for **House Bill 1145**.

When something horrible like a sexual assault happens, what **do** we do? What **can** we do?

Often, we feel **helpless**.

If we know the victim or the victim's family, we can support them by sending a card, money, food, offering up our prayers.

Other times, we can only shake our head in disbelief wondering how such an evil act can happen.

Years ago, an 18-year-old woman was sexually assaulted at a hospital in Dickinson, ND.

Her case was investigated. However, because of the trauma she suffered, she wasn't strong enough to help prosecutors.

The case went cold. The impact lingered.

In the legislation you have before you (**House Bill 1145**), the victim, such as this 18-year woman, once diagnosed to be strong enough, can meet with a State's Attorney requesting a criminal case be opened.

The State's Attorney may or may not pursue it.

This legislation will give victims **time**.

**Time** to heal, as best as possible, from the trauma of a barbaric act against them.

And time to **seek justice** on their terms determined by their health.

The essence of the **House Bill 1145** begins at line **20** which says, "Prosecution must be commenced in the proper court within two years **AFTER** the victim **no longer** has a disabling mental condition if;

*a. The victim was 18 years old or older at the time the offense was committed.*

*b. The victim developed a disabling condition as the result of the offense.*

*c. The victim and victim's mental health provider agrees in writing that the victim no longer has a disabling mental condition.*

We believe **House Bill 1145** is an opportunity for State leaders to come alongside victims of sexual assault and give them the opportunity to seek justice when they are healthy enough to seek justice.

You cannot imagine how important this is to crime victims and their families. We ask for your support.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and committee members.