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House Bill No. 1269
House Judiciary Committee
Testimony Presented by Seth O’Neill, JD, MSW
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Chairman Klemin and members of the Committee, my name is Seth O’Neill and I am representing CAWS North Dakota in support of HB 1269.

This bill would add additional criminal offenses to the list that requires an offender complete domestic violence offender programming. This change would include crimes that are similar to the crimes already included in the statute.

Current Criminal Offenses	New Criminal Offenses
Simple Assault (12.1-17-01)	Harassment (12.1-17-07)
Assault (12.1-17-01.1)	Stalking (12.1-17-07.1)
Domestic Violence (12.1-17-01.2)	Kidnapping (12.1-18-01)
Aggravated Assault (12.1-17.02)	Felonious Restraint (12.1-18-02)
Reckless Endangerment (12.1-17-03)	Unlawful Imprisonment (12.1-18-03)
Terrorizing (12.1-17-04)	Criminal Mischief (12.1-21-05)
Menacing (12.1-17-05)	Interference with Telephone During Emergency Call (12.1-21-06.1)
	Disorderly Conduct Restraining Order Violation (12.1-31.2-01)
	Order Prohibiting Contact Violation (12.1-31.2-02)
	Domestic Violence Protection Order Violation (14-07.1-06)

Domestic violence intervention programming is offered throughout North Dakota. Trained professionals complete an initial intake assessment with an individual and then place them in an appropriate group. These groups are intensive and typically require attendees to complete around 24-26 weeks of sessions. The North Dakota Alliance to End Partnership Abuse

has published program standards that promote effectiveness of the programs. As you can see from the map I attached to my testimony, there are programs in nine communities throughout North Dakota. Some of these programs are offered by domestic violence organizations and others are offered by other community organizations. Lutheran Social Services previously offered some of the programs prior to their closer. Since then, different organizations have picked up these programs due to the importance of these services as you will hear from Michelle Erickson from the Abused Adult Resource Center in Bismarck.

From July 2021 – July 2022, these nine programs provided services to 395 individuals. The total cost to administer these programs is \$723,067 per year with \$150,000 per year in funding provided by the DHHS Public Health Division budget. The DHHS has requested a budget increase for the next biennium for these programs (HB1004). Additionally, participants are required to pay for the programs on a sliding scale fee. However, that does not make up for the total cost of the programs. Nonetheless, we believe these programs are a cost effective measure to reduce violence in our communities and are committed to providing them. If all 395 individuals were incarcerated for reoffending that would cost the state \$16,985,000.¹ Accordingly, if we can encourage some of these offenders to change their behavior to avoid future violence it is cost-effective and an important method of making our communities safer.

Including the additional crimes will ensure that more individuals complete these services. By doing so, we are taking a step to ensure that our communities are a safer place for victims and all of us. As such, we encourage the committee to give HB1269 a do pass recommendation. I appreciate your time and I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

¹ Based on a 2019 cost estimate from the National Institute of Corrections. See [North Dakota 2019 Statistics](#).