



JAMESTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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SCOTT EDINGER
Chief of Police

January 30, 2023

North Dakota House Judiciary Committee
Rep. Lawrence R. Klemin, Chair

RE: Testimony in support of House Bill 1415

Chairman Klemin and members of the committee,

I am the Chief of Police for the City of Jamestown, and I am here to speak in obvious support for House Bill 1415.

The city of Jamestown currently holds a population of approximately 16,000 people and has fluctuated around that number or a bit less for more than 60 years. The Jamestown Police Department is staffed at 29 full-time sworn officers, down from 31 a few years ago, due to budgeting constraints. That staffing level has been steady since the early 1970s.

During that time, the training and reporting requirements, and duties of law enforcement have increased exponentially. At no time in my career have I seen a responsibility relieved from law enforcement. This legislative session is going to be no different, as several Bills have even more demands on law enforcement agencies across the state. Law Enforcement's responsibility for sex offender registration is one of those duties added during my career.

The previous Jamestown Police Department administration implemented a program to help monitor sex offender registrations in the mid-2000s that had every officer of the department monitoring a list of offenders, monthly. This program was voluntary and for its time, did a good job of building rapport and helped simplify the registration process and keep it in the front of offender's minds. This system relies heavily on the truthfulness of the offender. Time, technology, officer recruitment and retention, and case load have taken a toll on that system.

Leading up to the introduction of HB 1415, our department has done a significant amount of research on what other departments are doing and discussed ways for our department to improve its monitoring and registrations. Given our current staffing level, and complicated by the sheer number of offenders present in our city, options used by other departments aren't possible without some level of assistance.

As a department we understand the significance of the economic contribution institutions like the North Dakota State Hospital, James River Correctional Center and Sex Offender Treatment Unit provide for our city. In this case however, those contributions don't match the case load created for the Jamestown Police Department.

I ask for your support in addressing these issues through the passage of HB 1415.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Edinger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Scott" and last name "Edinger" clearly distinguishable.

Scott Edinger
Chief of Police