

January 24, 2023  
House Judiciary Committee  
HB 1428  
Rep. Klemin, Chair

For the record, I am Stephanie Dassinger Engebretson. I am appearing on behalf of the Chiefs of Police Association of North Dakota. I am also the deputy director and attorney for the North Dakota League of Cities.

The Chiefs of Police appear today in opposition to HB 1428. The bill creates a required certification requirement for law enforcement canine teams. Under subsection 2 of the bill, the canine team must be "certified as a canine team by an association identified by the attorney general which specializes in canine training." Until very recently, the Chiefs of Police were not aware of such an association existing in the State of North Dakota. It is unclear what standards this association would use and what the cost would be for a canine team to be certified by this association.

When a police department decides to invest in adding a canine to its department, a lot of research is done to make sure the canine will meet the needs of the department. Additionally, a lot of work goes into making sure training and certifications are up to date. The police chiefs are acutely aware that if a non-reputably trained canine is selected or if certification and training is not kept current, there will be legal ramifications in terms of liability and evidence collected using the canines may not be admissible into court. This certification program would just be a duplication of work the police departments are already doing.

As an alternative to setting up a separate certification program, the Chiefs of Police suggest looking into requiring canine teams to register and file their certification documentation with the Attorney General's office.

Due to the several concerns with this bill, the Chiefs of Police request a Do Not Pass recommendation on HB 1428.

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