

North Dakota State's Attorneys' Association

January 28, 2023

To: Judiciary Committee
Hon. Chairman Klemin
Hon. Vice-Chair Karls
Members of the Committee

RE: House Bill No. 1492

Chairman Klemin, Vice-Chair Karls, and Members of the Judiciary:

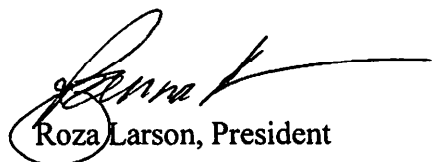
The North Dakota State's Attorneys' Association (NDSAA) is submitting this letter in **SUPPORT** of House Bill 1492 and to strongly urge you to issue a **DO PASS** on this bill.

For too long, our state has failed to address the devastating impacts on children who witness domestic violence. According to childwelfare.gov, children who witness domestic violence suffer long-term impacts including, "emotional, mental and social damage that can affect their developmental growth." According to psychologytoday.com, "children witness 68% to 80% of all domestic assaults."

A recent study on the impacts of witnessing domestic violence provides chilling information: "[t]he psychological aftermath of exposure to DV can include fear of harm or abandonment, excessive worry or sadness, guilt, inability to experience empathy or guilt, habitual lying, low frustration tolerance, emotional distancing, poor judgment, shame, and fear about the future. . . Compared with other kids, those who have witnessed DV experience far greater incidence of insomnia, bed wetting, verbal, motor, and cognitive issues, learning difficulties, self-harm, aggressive and antisocial behaviors, depression and anxiety, as well as, most troubling, adult domestic violence, with boys often becoming offenders, victims, or both, and girls more likely to become victims (Brown and Bzostek, 2003)."

Redefining our current law to charge batterers with child abuse for committing acts of domestic violence in front of children is one step in the right direction to allow our offices to prosecute these offenders and protect the children of our state. We thank you for your support of this very important issue by issuing a **do pass**.

On behalf of the North Dakota State's Attorneys:


Roza Larson, President


Ashley L. Lies, Executive Director