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HB 1518 – House Judiciary

Good morning, Chairman Klemin and members of the House Judiciary. My name is Jaci Hall and I am the Executive Director of the North Dakota Association for Justice. I am here today in support of HB 1518.

Every 68 seconds in this country a sexual assault happens. Every nine minutes that assault involves a child. In 2021, the Attorney General's Office indicated that 1,089 sexual offences under Chapter 12 were investigated.

North Dakota is not immune to these predators. With the rise of social platforms and opportunities for predators to find and assault men, women and children; support for victims is crucial.

A few weeks ago, this committee heard HB1145. It provided support to sexual assault victims who develop a disabling mental condition due to an attack. 99% of all victims suffer from a temporary or permanent mental illness after being assaulted. Although the bill was amended, HB1518 provides support the victims need to start the heal, while HB1145 gives them time to seek these services.

Victims should not be silenced or rushed to relive their trauma until they are ready. HB1518 gives victims the rights and the support they need to start the healing process.

I urge the committee to make a DO PASS recommendation on HB1518. I stand for questions.