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**House Bill No. 1518**  
**House Judiciary Committee**  
**Testimony Presented by Seth O'Neill, JD, MSW**  
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**February 1, 2023**

Chairman Klemin and members of the Committee, my name is Seth O'Neill and I am representing CAWS North Dakota in support of HB 1518. In 2021, our member programs served 1,139 new victims of sexual assault. Nationwide, one in four women and one in nine men report being sexual assaulted during their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> HB1518 would provide for a list of rights that sexual assault survivors are entitled to. This would ensure that sexual assault survivors are notified of these rights and can assert them throughout the criminal justice process.

We have conferred with the bill sponsor on a few suggested amendments that provides clarity to the bill and conforms to current North Dakota law. Additionally, I would like to point out that most of the rights in this bill are already listed under 12.1-34-02. However, it is my understanding that the bill supporters would like a separate section specifically delineating the rights of sexual assault survivors. The new rights are the right to access the law enforcement report and acute forensic medical exam and the right to have an attorney or sexual assault advocate present when speaking to law enforcement.

We encourage the committee to give HB1518 a do pass recommendation with the amendments brought forward by Rep. Richter. I appreciate your time and I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> See [National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2016/2017 Report on Sexual Violence.](#)