



TESTIMONY on HB 1537
from the
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS—NORTH DAKOTA CHAPTER
to the
ND House Judiciary Committee
February 7, 2023

Dear Chair Klemin and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

NASW-ND submits this testimony in support of House Bill 1537. We appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective.

The North Dakota Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-ND) recently supported bias crime ordinances in both Bismarck and Grand Forks. Similarly, this bill will protect North Dakota residents by documenting bias crimes, holding perpetrators of bias crimes accountable, creating trainings for peace officers while also providing clarity and consistency throughout the state.

The NASW Code of Ethics states that social workers support the inherent dignity and worth of a person, regardless of individual or group differences. This bill would help protect vulnerable populations by giving them additional legal protection against hate-motivated violence and harassment.

This bill would also increase public safety by stopping harassment and intimidation towards certain populations before it turns violent. It also has the potential to increase the reporting of bias crimes which in turn may give law enforcement more tools and resources to hold perpetrators accountable.

Your support of this bill would send a message that bias crimes are not tolerated and that North Dakota values and protects individuals, regardless of their differences.

NASW-ND respectfully requests that members of the House Judiciary Committee vote DO PASS on HB 1537.

Testimony submitted by:
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NASW-ND

The North Dakota Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-ND) is a membership association representing social workers in the state of North Dakota. The mission of NASW-ND is to strengthen and protect the practice of social work in North Dakota and to advance sound and equitable social policy. Our position on this bill is solidly grounded in our organization's mission.