

February 6, 2023

To: House Judiciary Committee

Re: Do Pass on HB 1537

Chairman Klemin and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I ask that you consider a recommendation of "Do Pass" for HB 1537, relating to the data collection and reporting of bias crimes, as well as reenacting sections of law relating to peace officer standards with a board to oversee training on bias crimes, aggravated assault, harassment, and criminal mischief.

If there is a statewide mechanism for reporting and organizing data for such crimes, we would have a more accurate representation of how many of these crimes are occurring across the state. With a training program in place for peace officers on bias related crimes, along with a stiffer penalty for such crimes, perhaps these crimes would decrease.

If these measures were passed into law citizens who experience aggravated assault and harassment due to race, color, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, or ancestry, may feel safer in our communities.

In June 2022, the Bismarck City Commission considered a hate crime ordinance, but it was decided that such an ordinance would work best on a statewide level. HB 1537 provides this opportunity.

Please choose "DO PASS" on HB 1537.

Sincerely,
Christine Kujawa
Citizen, Bismarck, ND