

TESTIMONY OF

Sergeant Wade Kadrmas

Good morning, Chairman Ruby and members of the House Transportation Committee, my name is Wade Kadrmas, and I am the Safety and Education Officer for the North Dakota Highway Patrol. I am here today to provide neutral testimony on House Bill 1295 which would remove the requirement for a front license plate in North Dakota.

From a law enforcement standpoint, a front license plate serves a legitimate purpose. For example, someone who witnesses a crime or is the victim of a crime often tries to obtain a license plate number or at least a partial license plate number to relay a vehicle description to law enforcement.

Many types of incidents could benefit from license plate descriptions including:

- Attempt to locate calls such as a missing person or suicidal subject
- Gas drive offs
- Crashes involving a vehicle that flees the scene
- Stolen vehicles
- Violent incidents such as shootings
- Road rage incidents
- Reckless driver calls
- Amber, Silver, and Blue Alerts
- Rolling domestic violence calls
- Trespassing situations
- Assaults
- Burglaries

Law enforcement officers across the state respond to these types of incidents on a daily basis and rely on license plate numbers as one method to quickly identify a suspect vehicle. Officers are frequently checking front license plates on passing vehicles during each shift.

From a highway patrol standpoint, our agency enforces registration violations as well. Everyone who operates a vehicle on a public roadway is expected to register their vehicle, but the fact is that failing to register a vehicle is a common violation. Front license plates help with enforcement.

It's understandable that someone who owns an expensive vehicle wouldn't want to drill holes into their front bumper, but there are options to attach license plates without causing any damage such as adhesive license plate brackets.

States like California are pilot testing license plate wraps which are installed and removed like graphics on our patrol vehicles. California's DOT authorizes a vendor, and interested customers pay a fee of \$120 to purchase their own front plate so there is no cost to the state. This would be similar to purchasing an antique plate in North Dakota which costs \$100 or a collector plate which costs \$160.

A front license plate may not be aesthetically pleasing, but it does serve a purpose, especially helping members of the public and law enforcement identify potential vehicles involved in a crime. It's difficult to see a rear license plate in a rear-view mirror after a vehicle passes, and it's impossible at night. Even the color, make, and model of a vehicle can be difficult to decipher at night, so a front license plate is beneficial.

This concludes my testimony, and I would be happy to answer any questions.