

January 26, 2023
House Transportation Committee
HB 1325
Rep. Dan Ruby, Chair

For the record, I am Stephanie Dassinger Engebretson. I am appearing on behalf of the Chiefs of Police Association of North Dakota. I am also the deputy director and attorney for the North Dakota League of Cities.

The Chiefs of Police appear today in support of HB 1325. The bill increases the penalty to \$40 for intersection related violations. With the exception of a stop sign violations, the penalty for intersections has not been raised since 1973. In 2019, the Legislature passed a bill that raises the penalty for stop sign violations to \$40. HB 1325 would move all intersection violations to \$40.

When you look at the data related to intersections and crashes it becomes quite obvious that we need to do everything we can to try to change behavior at intersections.

From 2017 to 2021 there were 72,483 crashes and 25,327 of those crashes occurred at an intersection. In other words, just over one-third of the crashes occurred at intersections. However, if you dig down into the types of crashes, from 2017 to 2021 there were a total of 107 fatality crashes in North Dakota. All 107 of those fatality crashes occurred at intersections.

One issue that always comes up when we talk about traffic fines is that in 2019, the Legislature decided to give cities the discretion to double the fines for moving violations. In other words, cities can increase the fine for running a red light from \$20 to \$40. Antidotally, we know that generally there is denser traffic in our cities and that traffic violations are more likely to result in a crash. This discretion to double fines is also justified by the data.

As I stated earlier, from 2017 to 2021 there were 72,483 crashes in North Dakota. 64,566 of those crashes were in cities. In other words, just over 89% of the crashes from 2017 to 2021 occurred in cities. Further, of the total 25,327 intersection crashes in North Dakota, 22,680 of those intersection crashes occurred in cities. In other words, 89% of the intersection crashes in North Dakota occurred in cities.

In order to try to deter traffic violations at intersections and decrease crashes in North Dakota, the Chiefs of Police Association of North Dakota respectfully requests a DO PASS recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration.