

TESTIMONY OF

Major Tom Iverson, Chief of Operations

Good morning Chairman Ruby and members of the committee. My name is Tom Iverson and I serve as the chief of operations for the North Dakota Highway Patrol. I am here to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2285.

This bill would change the offense for leaving the scene of a property damage crash from an infraction to a B misdemeanor. Far too often troopers investigate property damage crashes where drivers leave the scene after damaging someone else's property. These drivers may or may not return to provide their information. When troopers are able to locate them, they at times come across individuals who they suspect may have been under the influence of some type of substance at the time of the crash. The only applicable charge in this scenario is an infraction under 39-08-08 for leaving the scene of a crash involving a fixed object or a non-criminal charge with a fine of \$50 for failure to give immediate notice of a reportable crash. These lesser charges may encourage drivers to leave the scene of a property damage only (non-vehicle) crash and not report it right away to the property owner or law enforcement.

Currently under NDCC 39-08-07 it is an A misdemeanor for a driver to leave the scene of a crash involving damage to an unattended vehicle. This would be any crash resulting in damage and not just damage that is \$4,000 or greater. Damage to other property should be handled similarly since \$3,500 in damage to a fence or building is no different than \$3,500 in damages to an unattended vehicle.

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.