

**House Bill 1002**

**Testimony of Tony J. Weiler**

**Senate Appropriations-Government Operations Division**

**March 7, 2023**

Senator Wanzek and Members of the Government Operations Division of the Senate Appropriations Committee, my name is Tony Weiler, and I am the Executive Director of the State Bar Association of North Dakota (SBAND).

SBAND is the professional association of over 3,000 licensed North Dakota lawyers. On behalf of SBAND President Jennifer Albaugh and our Board of Governors, I present this testimony in support of HB1002, the Budget Appropriation of the North Dakota Judicial Branch. SBAND and our Courts have a unique and long history of working together, and SBAND has a long history of supporting the Court's budget. While SBAND is not an arm of the Court, we work very closely with the Board of Law Examiners, are involved in our disciplinary system, and work with the Court on many joint committees. The important and often constitutional work done by our Court System impacts both the bar, and the many citizens of North Dakota who they represent.

Our Court System is efficient and works hard to provide a forum for our member and their clients to settle disputes, and deal with a variety of legal issues. We support the Court's request of increased salaries, new judgeships, the increase in support staff, as well as a long overdue raise in the family law mediator fee. The family mediator program has been very successful, but the fee is well below the market rate.

It is vital to fund the Judicial Branch to the maximum extent possible. The State Bar Association encourages a Do Pass.

Tony Weiler

[tony@sband.org](mailto:tony@sband.org)

701-220-5846