

March 8, 2023

Senator Dick Dever, Chairman
North Dakota State Legislature
Senate Appropriations Committee, Human Resources Division
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

Chairman Dever and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

As law enforcement agencies across the state, we collaborate almost daily with domestic violence and rape crisis agencies in our local communities. These collaborative relationships have grown significantly throughout the past 40 plus years, with law enforcement agencies and domestic violence/sexual assault organizations working closely together for the safety of citizens and their children, while holding individuals responsible for these crimes accountable.

Our organizations work together for mutual benefit by providing shared training to staff, attending collaborative meetings, tracking criminal justice data, and making criminal justice system improvements on an ongoing basis.

When law enforcement responds to sexual assault, many of our communities activate a Sexual Assault Response Team. These multidisciplinary teams include members from law enforcement, medical professionals and advocates, responding together to ensure that victims of this invasive crime repeat the accounts of their experience the least number of times possible. This coordination ensures that evidence is collected, the chain of custody is followed, and evidence is preserved for prosecution, all while providing a trauma-informed response that gives victims the support they need.

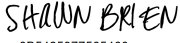
In cases of domestic violence, officers respond in the heat of the moment during times of elevated risk to themselves and victims and must make decisions that take into account the safety of all. Several communities participate in the Lethality Assessment Program, connecting victims of violence with a domestic violence advocate at the time of the incident, increasing awareness of safety services available to them while decreasing the likelihood that they will be killed during a future incident.

Law enforcement also supports the work of domestic violence and sexual assault organizations by responding to requests for welfare checks, providing police escorts in high danger situations, responding to security threats at shelters and offices when needed, serving and enforcing protection orders and much more. Related, our organizations count on the services of these agencies to provide safety, support, and guidance after our officers and deputies leave the scene. Through long-term support provided by domestic violence and sexual assault

organizations, these complex patterns can be interrupted. In addition, the risk to victims can be lessened through successful investigation, prosecution and ultimately rehabilitation for those who use violence.

The below undersigned fully support increased funding for the critical services provided by domestic violence and sexual assault agencies in our state.


Respectfully submitted,


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