

HB1138

Good Morning Chair Larson and members of Judiciary,

For the record I am Bernie Satrom and I am honored to serve the great people of District 12 in Jamestown and NE Stutsman County

The initial version of the bill set up a Mental Health pilot program which had some issues. This bill was amended with the help of the key stakeholders to help and not hinder the process.

In this bill A mental health court is a district court supervised treatment program approved by the supreme court which combines judicial supervision with mental health services and treatment in a licensed treatment program. This bill says that The supreme court may adopt rules, including rules of procedure, for mental health court programs.

Presently our state has a Drug Court which has been very helpful in providing accountability for offenders and help them get their lives back on track. It ultimately saves our state money and helps develop productive neighbors and citizens. I would encourage you to visit one at some point. It is exciting to see the tough love, accountability and life changes that are accomplished in this process.

A recent study reported that 83.7% of people screened positive for mental illness prior to being booked into jail.

Mental Health Diversion programs divert people with mental health disorders from the Criminal Justice System into appropriate treatment.

Failure to address mental health issues helps no one. Putting those people in jail does not address the issue. Incarcerating individuals with mental illness, fills our jails, prolongs mental illness and potentially turns them into criminals.

The Mental health court concept works

One of our neighboring states reported that recidivism rates have dropped 62% for this population since incorporating mental health courts.

Mental health courts give us the Opportunity to address mental health problems in their infancy rather than allowing it to grow and get more serious.

Mental Health Courts save money versus warehousing people in jail.

Mental Health Courts Lowers recidivism

Mental Health Courts help people become healthy productive citizens and neighbors.

HB1138 could make a Difference. I would stand for any questions.

