

HB 1138
68th Legislative Assembly
House Judiciary Committee
March 22, 2023
Testimony of Travis W. Finck, Executive Director NDCLCI in Support

Madam Chair Larson, members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I rise today on behalf of the Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents in support of HB 1138. The Commission on Legal Counsel is the state agency responsible for the provision of legal services for individuals when there is a constitutional, statutory or rule based right to counsel.

As part of our mission, the Commission was deeply involved in the reform efforts last session dealing with how the Courts are responding to the increase in mental health cases we were seeing in criminal courts. Diverting cases from jail time and providing services is a vast improvement over the incarcerate and give them treatment their model.

Diverting nonviolent cases with defendants in a mental health crisis only makes sense. A person in crisis needs our help, they don't need to be jailed. As Mahatma Gandhi once said, "the true measure in society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members". For all the reasons state herein, the Commission supports HB 1138.

Respectfully Submitted:



Travis W. Finck
Executive Director
(701) 845-8632
tfinck@nd.gov