

Good morning, Madam Chair, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

My name is Austen Schauer, representing District 13 in West Fargo.

HB 1145 is a bill to amend and reenact section 29-04-02.1 relating to the prosecution for gross sexual imposition.

This bill was brought forward to **help victims** of felony sex crimes.

These crimes often leave victims suffering for months and even years through **PTSD** or other forms of disabling trauma.

Our original bill was to give these victims more time to heal by creating a **two-year window** in the statute of limitations.

A prosecutor could pursue trial if a mental health provider agreed in writing that the victim was healthy enough to go to trial.

The House Judiciary Committee formed a **sub-committee** who determined there were **too many complications** with the original bill.

They recommended (and the House Judiciary Committee agreed) a better answer would be to **extent** the statute of limitations for a felony sex crime to **seven years**. It is currently at three years.

This is in line with the intent of the original bill: giving **more time** for a victim to heal if prosecutors decide to move forward with their case.

HB 1145 says to victims of sexual assaults: we hear your cries, and we will do what we can to help you **seek justice**.

Madam Chair and committee members, we ask for your support of **HB 1145** and I stand open for questions.