

HB 1160 – Juvenile Courts
Senate Judiciary
March 21, 2023
Rep. Shannon Roers Jones

This bill provides that if a child commits a crime while they are a minor, that barring circumstances that would typically move a case to adult court, the case should be tried in juvenile court even if it doesn't go to trial until that person is an adult.

The basis of this bill is equitable treatment for offenders. People who commit the same crime, at the same age, should not be treated differently just because prosecution may be delayed.

There are several elements of juvenile court that are specifically tailored for offenders who lack maturity and brain development of an adult. The current status of the law is arbitrary and harms defendants by dragging cases that should be handled privately in juvenile court into the public forum of district court.

There are a couple of supporters of this change who will be coming after me who will be able to share in detail the background and application of the changes proposed in the bill. Mark Friese is a Fargo attorney who works on both adult and juvenile cases, and Karen Kringlie is the Director of Juvenile Court for the East Central and Southeast Judicial Districts.

I am happy to answer any of the committee's high level questions, but you may want to wait to hear from the experts as I believe their testimony will answer most of the questions you may have.