

Representative Nico Rios  
March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
Introduction to House Bill 1213

Madam Chair and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

My name is Nico Rios and I am the representative out of District 23 which is located on the Northwest Side of Williston in Williams County. I'm here to introduce House Bill 1213.

House Bill 1213 states that if an individual charged with a crime of violence is found not guilty due to the justification of self-defense, the court may order the state to reimburse the defendant for all reasonable costs incurred in defense, including loss of wages and time, attorney's fees, and other expenses involved in the defense.

There have been many unfortunate cases we have seen where individuals were taken to trial for murder or attempted murder over clear instances of self defense.

Even if the trial ends up in acquittal the innocent defendant may end up losing in a variety of ways. These cases can last months and even years. This can often cause the loss of jobs, marriage, businesses, homes and most importantly a good reputation from media scrutiny.

For instance, I don't believe the woman who has been a victim of domestic abuse for years and finally decides to buy a gun for self defense should have to worry about going bankrupt, or worse, going to prison for defending her life and the lives of her children.

How many of us here have a gun for self defense at home? Or in our car? Or even like to carry a firearm? I'm sure a lot of us in here do some of these things. We all hope and pray we never have to use a gun for self defense. But if we ever do, it is reassuring knowing if we are tried when it is clearly self defense, the court has the ability and the option to help correct the situation.

I believe House Bill 1213 is a great step in the right direction in protecting North Dakotans right to self defense and urge a do pass recommendation.