

ENGROSSED HB 1289
Senate Judiciary Committee
February 20, 2023
Testimony of Travis Finck, Executive Director, NDCLCI

Good Morning. Madam Chair Larson, Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is Travis Finck and I am the Executive Director for the North Dakota Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents. The Commission is the state agency responsible for the delivery of indigent defense services in the state of North Dakota. The Commission rises in support of HB 1289 and urges a DO PASS recommendation.

HB 1289 allows the option for the District Court Judge presiding over the drug court to waive all unpaid fines, fees and costs imposed in a criminal judgment for an individual who successfully completes drug court. Drug Court has served to be an invaluable tool in rehabilitation of non-violent offenders with substance abuse issues. As one of the agencies who would potentially receive the funds from Court Fees, the Commission feels successful completion of drug court is more valuable than the fees that would be collected. Waiver of the fees would serve as an incentive to complete the program. Research suggests drug court graduates are 11 times less likely to reoffend than those who are terminated from the program.¹ Thus, incentives to get participants to complete Drug Court reducing recidivism outweigh the minimal loss of collections.

Therefore, the Commission respectfully requests a DO PASS recommendation.

Respectfully submitted:



Travis W. Finck, Executive Director
NDCLCI

¹ Predicting criminal recidivism following drug court: Implications for drug court practice and policy advocacy.
Journal of Addictions & Offender Counseling, 35, 15-29.