

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

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

What should the penalty be, *what should the punishment be*, for someone who destroys property in a riot?

It is an issue we've rarely dealt with in North Dakota, but it became **all too real** in downtown Fargo on May 30, 2020.

What should the penalty be when people from outside our state show up to organize a protest, knowing full well the objective is to turn the protest into a riot?

What should the penalty be when they are successful in spouting anger which leads to violence?

When they assault police officers, screaming obscenities into the faces of our African American officers?

When they taunt, set fires, vandalize buildings and businesses with rocks and bricks...damage vehicles including cop cars followed by looting?

**What should that penalty be?**

After the Fargo riot, the main instigators left town (our town) having accomplished their goals of drawing attention to themselves while leaving behind more than **200 thousand dollars** in damages.

We fully support the constitutional right to a peaceful protest, but at the same time, we fully support our law enforcement when protests become anything but peaceful.

And we fully support *appropriate punishment* for those involve in this kind of criminal activity.

**We believe it should be a felony.**

**HB 1378** makes it clear:

Page 1, lines 19-20 say, “**A class C felony if the actor commits the offense while engaged in a riot.**”

Madam Chair and committee members, we ask for your support of **HB 1378.**

Thank you for your time and I stand for questions.