

March 16, 2023
Senate Transportation Committee
HB 1325
Sen. David A. Clemens, Chair

For the record, I am Stephanie Dassinger Engebretson. I am appearing on behalf of the Chiefs of Police Association of North Dakota. I am also the deputy director and attorney for the North Dakota League of Cities.

The Chiefs of Police appear today in opposition of HB 1325. In its initial form, HB 1325 only increased the penalty to \$40 for right of way related violations and the Chiefs of Police supported the bill. The House Transportation Committee added sections 1 and 3 to the bill which take away a city's ability to increase traffic fines by 100 percent.

Except for stop sign violations, the penalty for right of way violations has not been raised since 1973. In 2019, the North Dakota Legislature passed a bill that raised the penalty for stop sign violations to \$40. HB 1325 would increase the penalty for all right of way violations to \$40. The right of way violation that the Chiefs of Police are most concerned about are stop light violations. The current statewide penalty for a red light violation is \$20. Some cities have raised that penalty to \$40.

As mentioned earlier, sections 1 and 3 remove a cities' ability to double traffic fines; however, the denser traffic in our cities increases the likelihood for traffic violations occurring resulting in a crash. The crash data supports giving cities the authority to double traffic fines in cities.

From 2017 to 2021 there were 72,483 crashes in North Dakota. 64,566 of those crashes were in cities. In other words, just over 89% of the crashes from 2017 to 2021 occurred in cities.

The Chiefs of Police respectfully request that you amend the bill to remove sections 1 and 3, leaving a city's ability to double traffic fines in law. Further, the Chiefs of Police are open to amending section 2 to only address red light violations to narrowly tailor the bill to the problem the Chiefs most want to address.

Thank you for your consideration.