

TESTIMONY OF

**Sergeant Wade Kadrmas**

Good morning, Chairman Clemens and members of the Senate Transportation Committee, my name is Wade Kadrmas, and I am the Safety and Education Officer for the North Dakota Highway Patrol. I am here today on behalf of my agency in support of Senate Bill 2285.

This bill, along with the proposed amendment, would change the offense for leaving the scene of a property damage only crash from an infraction to a B misdemeanor. Far too often troopers investigate property damage only crashes where drivers leave the scene after damaging someone else's property. These drivers may or may not return to provide their information. When troopers are able to locate them, they at times come across individuals who they suspect may have been under the influence of some type of substance at the time of the crash. The only option law enforcement has as a charge is for an infraction under 39-08-08 for leaving the scene of a crash involving a fixed object or a non-criminal charge with a fine of \$50 for failure to give immediate notice of reportable crash. These lesser charges encourage drivers to leave the scene of a property damage only (non-vehicle) crash and not report it right away to the property owner or law enforcement.

Currently under NDCC 39-08-07 it is an A misdemeanor for a driver to leave the scene of a crash involving damage to an unattended vehicle. This would be any crash resulting in damage and not just damage that is \$4,000 or greater. Damage to other property should be handled similarly since \$3,500 in damage to a fence or building is no different than \$3,500 in damages to an unattended vehicle.

The patrol respectfully asks for your support on Senate Bill 2285, and I would be happy to answer any questions.