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## PROTECTION AND VICTIM SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, December 16, 2025  
Dakota Medical Foundation  
4321 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Fargo, North Dakota

Representative Bernie Satrom, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**Members present:** Representatives Bernie Satrom, Jason Dockter, Lawrence R. Klemin,\* Mary Schneider, Lori VanWinkle; Senators Keith Boehm, Ryan Braunberger, David A. Clemens, Dick Dever, Diane Larson

**Member absent:** Representative TJ Brown

**Others present:** Ramona Danielson, North Dakota State University

See [Appendix A](#) for additional persons present.

*\*Attended remotely*

**It was moved by Representative Schneider, seconded by Senator Boehm, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the September 30, 2025, meeting be approved as distributed.**

### CRIMINAL CONDUCT AGAINST CHILDREN STUDY

Dr. Ramona Danielson, Assistant Professor, Public Health Department, North Dakota State University, provided information ([Appendix B](#)) regarding adverse childhood experiences in North Dakota. She noted:

- An adverse childhood experience (ACE) score is a measure of abuse, neglect, household challenges, and adversity experienced before age 18.
- An ACE score of four or more is detrimental to long-term health and social outcomes.
- 17 percent of North Dakota adults have an ACE score of four or more.
- Preventing ACEs, stopping the accumulation of ACEs, and increasing protective factors are prevention strategies that help reduce the need and cost associated with crisis-driven response and public system demand.

Dr. Christopher Johnson, Chief Executive Officer, and Ms. Kirsten Baltezare, Prevention Education Supervisor, Rape and Abuse Crisis Center, provided information ([Appendix C](#)) regarding the Red Flag Green Flag Program curriculum. They noted:

- An environmental scan of schools and youth-serving organizations conducted by the North Dakota Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Task Force found 50 percent of respondents do not provide child sexual abuse prevention education.
- The Red Flag Green Flag Program for second graders is 1 of 25 child sexual abuse prevention education programs provided by the Rape and Abuse Crisis Center to public schools, universities, and organizations in the Fargo-Moorhead area.
- Each prevention education program is appropriately designed to empower the intended demographic with protective skills in accordance with the educational standards created by the Department of Public Instruction.

- Subsets of child sexual abuse, including child exploitation, grooming, AI-generated child sexual abuse material, sextortion, and human trafficking, have the same risk factors and can be prevented by the same protective measures.

Mr. Steven Harstad, Chief Agent, Bureau of Criminal Investigation, provided information ([Appendix D](#)) regarding Internet crimes involving children, pornography, and human trafficking. He noted:

- The state continues to experience a significant increase in cyber-enabled harm, including grooming, sextortion, online coercion, synthetic imagery, relationship-based manipulation, digital recruitment, and AI impersonation.
- In 2025, the Bureau of Criminal Investigation received 2,493 CyberTips, the highest in state history.
- Digital forensics are critical to modern child sexual abuse investigations, enabling investigators to identify victims, obtain warrants, and make arrests.
- A human trafficking investigation most often begins with investigating behaviors such as grooming, manipulation, or relationship-based exploitation before escalating to human trafficking.
- Investigations into Internet crimes against children and human trafficking are on a single digital investigative continuum, rather than separate investigative paths.

### COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Committee members:

- Discussed the role of prevention measures against child sexual abuse, noting the importance of early education and proactive policy approaches.
- Expressed interest in receiving additional information on the relationship between AI and child exploitation.

The committee recessed and reconvened after the committee members toured the Youthworks Fargo office and the Red River Children's Advocacy Center.

No further business appearing, Chairman Satrom adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

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Victoria Christian  
Counsel

ATTACH:4