



JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, June 17, 2026
Room 327B, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Senator Janne Myrdal, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Members present: Senators Janne Myrdal, Ryan Braunberger, Claire Cory, Dick Dever, Diane Larson, Dean Rummel; Representatives Nels Christianson, Karla Rose Hanson, Lawrence R. Klemin, Ben Koppelman, Gregory Stemen, Bill Tveit

Members absent: Senator Jose L. Castaneda; Representatives TJ Brown, Adam Goldwyn, Steve Vetter

Others present: Adam Anderson and Robyn Schmalenberger, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; Travis Finck, Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents; Dennis Ingold, Burleigh County; Bruce Johnson, Racing Commission; Thomas Lawler, North Dakota Lottery; Claire Ness, Attorney General's office; Donnell Preskey, North Dakota Association of Counties

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

It was moved by Senator Dever, seconded by Representative Tveit, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the April 1, 2026, meeting be approved as distributed.

Ms. Chelsea Flory, Director, Division of Children and Family Services, Department of Health and Human Services, provided a report ([Appendix B](#)) from the Juvenile Justice Diversion Services Task Force regarding the findings and recommendations of the task force established to review juvenile justice diversion services and programs. She noted a significant portion of grant funds remain unused due to challenges in recruiting staff to provide services to families and children within their communities. She also noted barriers to juvenile justice diversion services include limited service availability, communication and system changes, and restrictions on eligibility for diversion services.

Mr. Thomas Lawler, Director, North Dakota Lottery, provided a report ([Appendix C](#)) on the operations of the lottery.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Lawler noted the \$640,000 allocated to the Compulsive Gambling Prevention and Treatment Fund is required by statute.

Mr. Adam Anderson, Transitional Planning Program Manager, and Ms. Robyn Schmalenberger, Reentry Program Manager, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, provided a report ([Appendix D](#)) on procedures for tracking uniform data points and improving data connectivity between system partners. Mr. Anderson noted key challenges include coordinating with vendors, lack of compatibility among existing systems, and potential costs associated with creating a new system.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Anderson noted parole and probation officers and law enforcement agencies receive information through automated notifications within the North Dakota Criminal Justice Information Sharing Program, as well as through direct communication among law enforcement agencies. He noted the inability of local and state data systems to communicate with one another is not intentional.

Committee members expressed concerns regarding the lack of real-time connectivity and communication among systems.

Ms. Donnell Preskey, Government and Public Relations Specialist, North Dakota Association of Counties, on behalf of the North Dakota Sheriff's and Deputies Association, presented information regarding the statewide county survey on 24/7 Sobriety Program fees. She noted program fees and revenue sharing are established by the Attorney General through agreement with local counties.

Mr. Bruce Johnson, Executive Director, Racing Commission, provided information on the State Auditor's report relating to the Racing Commission.

Ms. Claire Ness, Chief Deputy Attorney General, Attorney General's office, presented information ([Appendix E](#)) regarding sentencing, correctional, and parole systems within the state.

In response to questions from committee members, Ms. Ness noted violations of probation conditions are not always reported to the state's attorney before a petition to terminate probation is filed.

Committee members expressed concerns regarding inmates receiving good time credit upfront rather than accruing the credit on a monthly basis.

Mr. Colby Braun, Director, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, presented an overview of the correctional system. He noted:

- The system is more effective when inmates have hope, purpose, and meaning.
- The department does not have authority to award good time before it is earned.
- The department must develop a case plan to determine the earliest date of release for each inmate; however, the calculation of the earliest release date does not constitute an award of good time.

Mr. Dennis Ingold, Senior Assistant State's Attorney, Burleigh County, presented information ([Appendix F](#)) regarding reasonable limitations on the early release of offenders sentenced to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Mr. Travis Finck, Executive Director, Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents, presented information regarding prison bed capacity and the management of the inmate population. He noted if the department does not manage the inmate population, prison beds will reach capacity resulting in inmates being housed in local jails or detention facilities. He noted local jails and detention facilities do not offer any of the rehabilitation services available within the prison system.

No further business appearing, Chairman Myrdal adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Austin Gunderson
Counsel

ATTACH:6