

February 25, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

HOUSE BILL NO. 1609

Introduced by

Representatives VanWinkle, Heilman, Hendrix, D. Johnston, Koppelman, Morton, D. Ruby,
Toman

Senators Castaneda, Paulson, Wobbema

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 27-11 of the North Dakota
2 Century Code, relating to admission to the bar examination through an apprenticeship program
3 developed, established, and implemented by the supreme court.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 27-11 of the North Dakota Century Code is created
6 and enacted as follows:

7 **State bar apprenticeship program.**

8 1. The supreme court, in cooperation with the state board of law examiners, shall
9 establish and implement an apprenticeship program to approve applicants to sit for the
10 bar examination as an alternative to receiving a juris doctor or equivalent degree from
11 a law school approved, or provisionally approved, for accreditation by the American
12 bar association.

13 2. The apprenticeship program must provide the following:

14 a. An applicant for admission to the state bar is qualified to be examined by the
15 state bar board if an applicant:

16 (1) Obtains a four-year college degree; and

17 (2) Has completed two thousand hours of engagement under the supervision of
18 a licensed attorney or a licensed tribal advocate, over a period not to
19 exceed five years.

- 1 b. A supervising attorney or supervising licensed tribal advocate must verify the
2 engagement of an applicant by submitting an affidavit to the state bar board.
- 3 c. The state bar board may not require a commencement notice, application, or
4 registration from an applicant before a supervised engagement.
- 5 d. An applicant has met the engagement requirement under paragraph 2 of
6 subdivision a of subsection 2 by submitting an affidavit from a supervising
7 attorney or supervising tribal advocate verifying an applicant has completed two
8 thousand hours of engagement.
- 9 e. ~~An applicant for admission to the bar is qualified for examination by the state~~
10 ~~board of law examiners by serving as a state legislator for four or more years.~~
- 11 ~~f.~~ The supreme court, after receiving and considering the state board of law
12 examiners' report of the results of an examination of applicants for admission to
13 the bar of this state, including applicants from the apprenticeship program, and
14 the recommendations of the board, shall enter an order authorizing the issuance
15 of certificates of admission to the bar to those applicants the court considers
16 entitled to admission.