

HB1003

House Appropriations – Education and Environment Division

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Bureau of Criminal Investigation

For the record, my name is Analena Lunde, and I serve as the Victim Specialist for the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), covering the Western Region of North Dakota from my office in Dickinson. I am a Registered Nurse and certified Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner. My colleague, Jill Krone, covers the Eastern Region of the state from her office in Fargo. Jill brings invaluable expertise as a former parole and probation law enforcement officer. Together, we have over 25 years of combined experience in law enforcement, advocacy, and lived experiences, which uniquely qualifies us to provide critical support to victims.

Our work spans numerous divisions and task forces, including the BCI General Investigation Division, the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU), the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, the Human Trafficking Task Force, and regional narcotics task forces across North Dakota. We also work closely with the Children's Advocacy Centers, sheriff departments, municipal law enforcement agencies, smaller State's Attorney offices without victim coordinators, and the Office of the Attorney General. Additionally, we actively participate as members of several federal multidisciplinary teams and Indigenous Task Forces, where we contribute to the development of best practices for victim services.

A Unique and Comprehensive Approach to Victim Services

As Supervisory Special Agent Jim Shaw mentioned, our Victim Services Unit is a unique extension of the BCI. We work directly alongside agents and law enforcement officers to ensure that victims and their families receive the care and support they need in the aftermath of a crime. We assist victims of all ages impacted by various types of crimes, including:

- **Violent crimes**, such as sexual assault
- **Non-violent crimes**, such as fraud

Our unit employs a holistic, trauma-informed, and victim-centered approach that includes:

- **Victim-Centered Support During Scene Responses:** We are present during search warrants and other law enforcement operations to assist identified victims and their families on scene, prioritizing their immediate needs and ensuring they feel safe and respected during the investigation.
- **Trauma-Informed Communication:** We bridge the gap between law enforcement officers and victims by using trauma-informed techniques to build trust and foster cooperation, ensuring victims are not pressured or overwhelmed.
- **Basic Needs and Crisis Intervention:** We address victims' immediate needs, creating a safe and more comfortable environment during initial interactions. This allows law

enforcement officers to focus on their duties while ensuring the victims' well-being is not overlooked.

- **Advocacy Within the Justice System:** We strengthen prosecution efforts by helping victims find their voice, prepare victim impact statements, and testify when necessary. Our support helps prosecutors build stronger cases by maintaining victim engagement.

Prevention and Training

Our work extends beyond immediate response to include prevention and education. We provide training to law enforcement agencies, Children's Advocacy Centers, schools, and victim service providers on topics such as:

- Human trafficking.
- Cyber safety, including exploitation, grooming, and sextortion.

Recently, we introduced a program called *The Vigilant Parent Initiative*, which educates parents and caregivers about five popular social media and gaming platforms. The program teaches strategies to safeguard devices, protect children online, and foster healthy communication between parents and children.

Support for Fallen Officers and Families Impacted by Officer-Involved Shootings

Our team also provides critical support to law enforcement families during some of their most challenging times, including in cases of officer-involved shootings and the loss of an officer in the line of duty. This work includes:

- **Immediate On-Scene Support:** We respond to assist families and departments immediately following an officer-involved shooting or loss. We provide emotional support, help coordinate logistics, and ensure families feel supported during a time of crisis.
- **Grief and Trauma Support:** For families of fallen officers, we connect them with grief counseling and other resources to help them navigate their loss. We remain a point of contact throughout their healing journey, ensuring they do not feel isolated or forgotten.
- **Department Support:** Recognizing the impact of trauma on entire departments, we offer guidance and resources to law enforcement agencies to address the mental health and well-being of officers who have been involved in or affected by these events.
- **Memorial and Remembrance Coordination:** We assist families and departments with planning and navigating memorial services or events to honor fallen officers, ensuring they feel supported and respected throughout the process.

Our role in these situations is to ensure that both the families and the law enforcement community have the resources and support they need to grieve, heal, and move forward together.

Comprehensive, Long-Term Advocacy

Our work doesn't end at the scene. We provide ongoing support to victims to help them navigate the long-term impacts of the crimes they've endured. This includes:

- **Post-Scene Advocacy:** We maintain contact with survivors to ensure their needs are met beyond the immediate incident. This may involve helping victims reintegrate into society, pursue education or job training, and access resources for long-term healing.
- **Guidance for Law Enforcement:** We assist officers in using trauma-informed, age-appropriate practices that reduce victims' anxiety and increase the likelihood of obtaining accurate and detailed statements.
- **Empowerment and Recovery:** We empower victims to actively participate in their own recovery and legal processes, fostering resilience and long-term healing.

Illustrating the Impact

The impact of our work is best demonstrated through real stories and there are so many. For example :

- **Human Trafficking Survivor:** We recently supported a survivor of human trafficking during a recovery operation. Our immediate presence provided clothing, food, and a safe environment, while follow-up services addressed her mental health and long-term care needs. Months later, she shared how our efforts gave her hope and empowered her to cooperate with law enforcement and pursue a fresh start.
- **Survivor of Sexual Assault:** One victim of a brutal sexual assault was kidnapped, drowned, and strangled multiple times before being left for dead. She was terrified to come forward, fearing she wouldn't be believed. Through our on-scene support and continued guidance during the investigation and prosecution, we connected her with resources and kept her informed about her case. With our support, she found the strength to testify, articulate her experience, and confront her abuser with confidence. Afterward, she expressed her gratitude, saying the trust and support we provided empowered her to reclaim her voice and begin healing.

A Call to Support Our Mission

Our work is proactive, preventative, and life changing. By addressing the immediate and long-term needs of victims, we break cycles of trauma, empower survivors, and foster trust in our justice system. However, our scope of work is extensive, and the demand for our services continues to grow.

I urge you to recognize the critical role the victim specialists play in ensuring justice and healing for those impacted by crime. With your continued support, we can expand our efforts and provide the resources necessary to meet the needs of North Dakota's most vulnerable.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.