



NORTH DAKOTA

Family Alliance LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1569

Jacob Thomsen, Policy Analyst
North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action
February 12, 2025

Good afternoon, Chairman Heinert and honorable members of the House Education Committee. My name is Jacob Thomsen, and I am a Policy Analyst with North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action. I am testifying on behalf of our organization in favor of House Bill 1569 and respectfully request that you render a “DO PASS” on this bill.

Our organization believes that every person has inherent worth, and dignity given from God. Human trafficking, in its various forms, steals that worth and dignity away from the people who are victims of it. A person becomes dehumanized and is turned into a product, rather than a soul with worth, capability, and potential. They deserve to be loved. That feeling of love gets ripped away when people are bought and sold like a commodity.

Human trafficking is an abhorrent crime that violates a victim in many ways but can be well hidden. Human trafficking is commonly described as hidden in plain sight. In North Dakota, I would also go so far as to say that many people simply don’t know what it is.

I can attest to that fact. Growing up, we heard about “stranger danger” in lower elementary school, but that was really it. I didn’t know what human trafficking was until I was a junior at the University of Mary. I had the privilege of taking a night class on the issue of human trafficking through my studies in Criminal Justice. The class was taught by Stacy Schaffer from the 31:8 Project.

I can confidently say that class changed my life. All at once I was aware of a massive population of people who are slaves today. I learned so much about how these horrible crimes work, how the criminals twist the minds of their victims, the hopelessness of these situations, and so much more. These things absolutely gripped my soul, and I wondered why I was only learning about this now, as a junior in college.

I came out of that class believing that every single person on that campus needed to know about this horrible issue, and that’s exactly what this bill addresses. It has been a personal goal of mine ever since I finished that class to help people understand what is going on right under our noses. This bill, if it becomes law, has the potential to affect not only the kids and faculty in

our schools and universities, but the entirety of our state. This education can and will change people's lives.

With anything, one of the first steps to fighting and addressing a problem is raising awareness. As a lifelong citizen of North Dakota, I can say that the average citizen does not know what human trafficking looks like. This bill directly addresses that issue and educates the citizens of our state who are arguably most vulnerable to this crime. Because of these reasons, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action respectfully requests that you render a "DO PASS" on House Bill 1569.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'd be happy to answer any questions.