

House Bill 1360

North Dakota's **House Bill No. 1360 aims to refine and enhance the enforcement process of the **North Dakota Ethics Commission** by amending multiple sections of the **North Dakota Century Code** and repealing certain outdated provisions.**

****Key Points of the Bill:****

1. **Clearer Definitions & Enforcement Process:**

- Establishes terms like "alleged violation," "enforcement action," and "ethical violation" to streamline ethics investigations.
- Defines "regulated individuals" as lobbyists, public officials, candidates, political committees, or contributors.
 - This second bullet is in line with the current definition for an "accused individual."

2. **Changes to Complaint Procedures:**

- Complaints can now be made verbally or in writing.
- The process actually removes complaints entirely and has concerned individuals submit "relevant information" instead. Individuals will submit the relevant information and are encouraged to be thorough for the Commission's review of any potential ethics violations.
- Strengthens confidentiality protections for complainants and respondents.

3. **Investigation & Resolution Updates:**

- Ethics Commission may dismiss complaints, investigate internally, or refer to law enforcement.
- Ensures law enforcement coordination on cases with potential criminal implications.

- **The bill removes the mandate that the Commission refer all criminal allegations brought to it. Instead, the Commission will have discretion to refer egregious criminal allegations to law enforcement.**

4. **Closed Meetings & Confidentiality:**

- **Clarifies when Commission discussions must remain confidential.**
- **Ensures transparency only after final Commission orders and legal proceedings conclude.**

5. **Repeal of Outdated Provisions:**

- **Eliminates certain sections related to complaint handling that have been replaced by updated enforcement mechanisms.**

****Purpose & Impact:****

This bill strengthens the Ethics Commission's authority, streamlines enforcement procedures, and upholds transparency while protecting the rights of individuals involved. It ensures ethical governance while refining due process protections.