

Keira Anderson
230 Broughton Ave
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1/20/25

Chairperson Ruby and Members of the Human Services Committee,

Re: Support for HB1337 – Funding Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment
in County Jails

My name is Keira Anderson, and I am from Minto, North Dakota. I am currently a student studying Psychology at the University of North Dakota. I am writing to demonstrate my support for HB1337.

In my time at the University of North Dakota, I have learned that the recidivism rate is alarmingly high, with around half of prisoners being re-arrested within a year of release. This is a clear indicator that incarceration is in desperate need of reform. However, prisoners don't automatically have access to resources that will assist in rehabilitation. Costs for those resources fall onto the county jails, leaving them unable to pay for them as well.

Part of understanding the psychology behind why the recidivism rate is so high is understanding the means by which behavior is altered. Studies have shown that simply imprisoning offenders doesn't help prevent future criminal activity. By itself, punishment is not the most effective means of altering behavior. If we want to see a decrease in recidivism, jails must provide resources that assist inmates in changing behavior.

There is a current inability to cover the funding for rehabilitation in jails. HB1337 would provide this funding, and would therefore be contributing to lowering the recidivism rate. It would also contribute to lowering costs for the justice system. I believe this is an issue of utmost importance, because not only does it concern the well-being of North Dakota residents, but it also concerns the safety and quality of North Dakota as a community.

I strongly encourage the community to support HB1337 and recommend its passage. If this bill is passed, thousands of lives can be radically improved. Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,

Keira Anderson

University of North Dakota Student