

Representatives of the House Industry, Business and Labor Committee

I would encourage a DO PASS on HB1272

Capitalism has always been held in high regard in this Republic of ours and has its own set of checks and balances that most of the time work out well if we let them. Since 2015, this has changed quite dramatically as investors, both nationally and internationally, flush with cash have been using valuations to create monopolies and hardships on citizens all over the United States. The hardships have played a significant role in a 26% increase in homelessness in Bismarck in the last 4 years, and a 16% nationwide increase in just the last year.

It was 2017 when I was first made aware of corporate investment companies coming in and buying manufactured home parks and apartments. As a community and citizen advocate at the time, and now a Bismarck City Commissioner since April of 2023, the homeless population is growing in a way that costs every citizen making it obvious that having more protections in place will benefit the health of our communities.

Also, it is important to note that I have been both a renter and a landlord and not everyone are angels, and with the dynamics of people being all over that map, passing of HB1272 will move us in a better path than we are living now. I would set a set of guidelines that both landlords and tenants could have some security in. Right now there is very little security to be found as it seems like in many cases landlords are using deposits and checks as a means to cashflow versus them being an incentive to not end up with damaged property.

Additionally, once someone is evicted, they find it very difficult to rent again. In which case do our communities struggle with the question of where people go? Many investment companies are also introducing questionably legal, possibly illegal lease documents. Add-in rapidly increasing rents, with several modes of tack on fees, it is making it very hard for people to survive, let alone grow into a better life.

The days of relying on the natural checks and balances in relation to capitalism are over as the need for the rule of law has become necessary to maintain having a thriving state, which should be free from being run over by homelessness. Help the citizens by giving them some guidance to help both citizens and landlords by giving them the structure that is both consistent and ethical.

Sincerely,

Mike (Michael) Connelly

