

House Judiciary Committee House Bill 1166

January 13, 2025

Testimony of Joseph Jahner

Chairman Klemin and members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Joseph Jahner. I am a Licensed Addiction Counselor with North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

I am requesting that House Bill 1166 be passed. More often than not, criminal offenses are linked directly to the progressive brain disease of addiction. Though no one chooses to become addicted, unfortunately, often times the result of that ends in criminal convictions. Upholding the status quo is only maintaining barriers and beneficial to no, including society.

Despite completing a court-imposed sentence, many convictions carry a life sentence due to the stigma associated with having a criminal record long after its expiration. Passing HB 1166 would allow individuals who found recovery and have turned their life around a fair opportunity to pursue housing, employment, and an education, thus allowing them to contribute to society and pay taxes. I would know this, because not only I am a Licensed Addiction Counselor, I am also a person with a criminal history. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Joseph Jahner, LAC

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