



**RE: Opposition to HB1361**

Dear North Dakota House Judiciary Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the National Association of Rational Sexual Offense Laws (NARSOL) North Dakota Advocates regarding House Bill No. 1361, which proposes mandatory minimum sentences for human trafficking offenses. While we strongly support efforts to combat human trafficking, we have concerns about the implementation of mandatory minimum sentences.

**Support for Anti-Trafficking Efforts**

We commend the intent behind this bill to address the serious issue of human trafficking. It's crucial that we take strong action against those who exploit vulnerable individuals.

**Opposition to Mandatory Minimums**

However, we respectfully oppose the mandatory minimum sentencing requirements outlined in this bill for the following reasons:

- **Reduced Judicial Discretion:** Mandatory minimums limit a judge's ability to consider individual case circumstances, potentially leading to unjust sentences.
- **Disproportionate Impact:** These sentences may disproportionately affect certain communities and fail to account for mitigating factors.
- **Ineffectiveness in Deterrence:** Research suggests that mandatory minimums do not significantly deter crime more than other sentencing approaches.
- **Increased Incarceration Costs:** Long mandatory sentences can lead to higher prison populations and increased costs to taxpayers.
- **Potential for Coerced Pleas:** The threat of lengthy mandatory sentences may pressure innocent defendants to plead guilty to lesser charges.

**Alternative Approaches**

Instead of mandatory minimums, we suggest considering:

- Increased funding for victim support services
- Enhanced training for law enforcement to identify and assist trafficking victims
- Rehabilitation programs for offenders
- Addressing root causes of human trafficking through social and economic initiatives

We urge you to reconsider the mandatory minimum sentencing provisions in this bill while maintaining a strong stance against human trafficking. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

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