

SB 2054
69th Legislative Assembly
House Judiciary Committee
February 18, 2025
Testimony of Todd Ewell, Deputy Director, NDCLCI

Chairman Klemin, members of the House Judiciary Committee, my name is Todd Ewell and I am the Deputy Director for the North Dakota Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents. The Commission is the state agency responsible for the delivery of indigent defense services in North Dakota. I rise today on behalf of the Commission to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2054.

Senate Bill 2054 provides a mechanism to expand the master jury list allowing for a more diverse venire in jury trials in North Dakota. A cross-section of the community in jury selection is crucial because it ensures that the jury reflects the diverse perspectives and experiences of the population, leading to a fairer trial by guaranteeing that no significant group is systematically excluded, upholding the principle of impartiality and public confidence in the justice system, as mandated by the Sixth Amendment of the US Constitution which guarantees the right to a jury selected from a representative cross-section of the community. By including a broad range of community members, the jury is better able to understand the context of the case and make decisions that resonate with the community as a whole. This serves not only to satisfy the 6th Amendment as applied to the States, but also to promote confidence in the Courts. When citizens see jury panels that reflect the community they live in, it serves to increase trust in the outcome.

For the reasons stated herein, the Commission supports SB 2054 and respectfully requests a do pass recommendation.

Respectfully Submitted:



Todd N. Ewell
Deputy Director, NDCLCI