

69th Legislative Assembly

Neutral Testimony

House Bill No. 1392

House Transportation Committee

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TESTIMONY OF

Sergeant Evan Savageau

Good morning, Chairman Ruby and members of the House Transportation Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today regarding House Bill 1392.

For the record, my name is Sergeant Evan Savageau, and I serve with the North Dakota Highway Patrol. I am here to provide neutral testimony on behalf of the agency regarding the current language of this bill. I would like to raise several considerations for the committee's further discussion.

As law enforcement officers, we are trained to recognize traffic violations and take enforcement action as appropriate. Under North Dakota Century Code (NDCC), law enforcement observes violations and responds by initiating routine traffic stops. When conducting these stops, officers consider the safety of their actions, factoring in traffic flow and patterns. When a violation is observed law enforcement will activate emergency red and blue lights to initiate the traffic stop. This process happens quickly, usually within seconds or minutes, to create a safe stop and avoid placing other motorists in danger.

As currently written, the bill proposes a mechanism for verifying whether a citizen is exempt from the requirement to display two license plates. This verification can only occur after a traffic stop has occurred. Once the stop is made, law enforcement will carry out the standard procedure of verifying the individual's driver's license, registration, and insurance. This process requires time, both to ensure the information is accurate and to complete the stop itself.

An issue could arise in situations where, while verifying this information, an officer finds other violations or detects the odor of an alcoholic beverage, marijuana, or other signs of potential criminal activity. In these cases, even if the individual is confirmed to be allowed to operate with only one plate, the officer will act in good faith and pursue an investigation into possible impairment or criminal activity.

As written, the bill will create situations where law enforcement is placed in a difficult position, given the potential for these kinds of interactions. Officers receive extensive training, both at the academy and through ongoing education, to recognize signs of

impairment or criminal activity. However, the language of this bill could inadvertently complicate the process of ensuring safety and public security during these stops.

With that in mind, we respectfully ask the committee to revisit the language of the bill and consider adjustments that account for these potential challenges in law enforcement interactions.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.