



North Dakota House of Representatives

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Chairman Ruby and members of the House Transportation Committee, I'm Macy Bolinske, representative from District 40. I'm honored to represent my district and the great people of Minot.

House Bill 1503 raises the felony class for a DUI with bodily injury. This bill is quite simple and would allow a judge to sentence up to ten years rather than being limited to five if the situation calls for it. As it currently stands, if an individual is left disabled from a DUI accident, that perpetrator can only be sentenced to five years and is often times sentenced to even less to allow for a probationary period. You will also notice that the other change is to the minimum. We have added one day to the one year sentence to adhere to another section in century code for a Class B Felony. This was added by the recommendation of a local defense attorney to prevent this offense from being dropped to a misdemeanor. The reason I chose not to raise the minimum significantly is because I'm aware there is a wide range of cases that vary from minor to severe. This bill allows for a judge to use discretion while also providing justice for victims.

A quick google search would tell you that we have the second highest DUI arrest rate in the country. You could argue that is because of our high arrest rates and in part due to the hard work of our law enforcement. I thank them for all the tragedies they've prevented thus far. You could also blame those statistics on the fact that North Dakota tops the charts for binge drinking in the United States and 35 percent of fatal crashes in North Dakota are alcohol related. This legislation is not radical when you look to other states such as Texas and Georgia that have similar laws in place. Texas classifies it as an "intoxication assault," with a minimum of two years imprisonment and a maximum of 10. Georgia has a maximum of 15 years imprisonment depending on the severity of the case. Many states also have Ignition Interlock Systems to further deter these individuals from driving under the influence.

I'm passionate about this as it is a completely avoidable tragedy for many individuals across our state and continues to be a prevalent issue. The "why" for this bill comes from a story of a young lady in my community and I will let those here to testify tell that story. I ask for your support in offering justice for victims and continuing to show that North Dakotans don't have a tolerance for these 100% preventable injuries because of someone's decision to drive under the influence.

I ask for a DO PASS and I appreciate your support for HB 1503.