

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2030
January 21, 2025
Senate Appropriations Committee
Education and Environment Division
Bill Wocken on behalf of the North Dakota League of Cities

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Appropriation Committee. For the record, my name is Bill Wocken, appearing on behalf of the North Dakota League of Cities in support of Senate Bill 2030.

Homelessness is a threat to not only our quality of life but to subsistence for many people in our state. Most of us, I would venture to say, know that there is homelessness in North Dakota. But I am also sure that many of us would be surprised, and perhaps alarmed, to find out how big this problem has become.

In the early 2000's the US Department of Housing and Urban Development asked the state and many of the largest cities in North Dakota to commit to development of a ten year plan to end homelessness. As work on the development of this plan got underway it quickly became apparent that the goal to end homelessness would be harder to achieve than first thought and that a ten year time period to carry out the plan greatly underestimated the scope of the problem and the effort needed to make headway on a solution to homelessness.

SB 2030 proposes five actions. The homeless grants proposed will start to deal with the impacts of presentday homelessness. The proposed investment in the HIF fund will help to incentivize the production of more affordable housing units and the proposed interim study coupled with a consultant contract to explore homelessness is a good step toward a long range plan to deal with the issue.

All these actions form a strategy to deal with the homeless issue. Please carefully consider Senate Bill 2030 so that we can take the first step to deal with this threat to our people and our future.