

01/19/2025



FROM THE DESK OF ADAM MARTIN FOUNDER AND CEO OF F5 PROJECT

Subject: Opposition Letter for SB 2128

Chair Larson and esteemed members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Adam Martin, and I am the Founder and CEO of the F5 Project. Since our inception in 2017, our mission has been to break the cycle of crime, addiction, and isolation by providing individualized care that fosters resilience and restores hope. Through our comprehensive housing initiatives, jail and prison programs, and care coordination within the Free Through Recovery framework, F5 Project has successfully supported over 30,000 individuals impacted by the justice system across North Dakota.

Today, I am here to testify in opposition to SB 2128, and I would like to present several logical and objective reasons for my stance.

Firstly, there have been no successful outcomes associated with Truth in Sentencing laws. Several states, including North Carolina, Arizona, and Florida, have enacted similar legislation, and the results have been concerning. All three states have seen increases in prison infractions, violations, and crime rates within their communities. This trend is particularly alarming in overcrowded jails and prisons, like those in North Dakota.

Additionally, data from the Criminal Justice Institute specifically regarding North Dakota's incarceration rates indicates that individuals who serve longer sentences often recidivate at higher rates compared to those who have shorter sentences. This is especially true for individuals who have engaged in effective reentry plans and participated in rehabilitation programs while incarcerated.

The North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) has made remarkable strides in rehabilitation over the past decade. Participation in reentry programs, such as Free Through Recovery, has been linked to lower recidivism rates. Since 2018, F5 Project has achieved a 75% success rate for participants in Free Through Recovery, underscoring the value of investing in reentry efforts and demonstrating a better return on investment for North Dakota compared to prolonged incarceration.

Decreasing participation in prison programming will ultimately lead to less safe prisons and communities. These programs are vital for fostering relationships between incarcerated individuals and outside agencies, allowing for the development of personalized reentry plans. Restricting access to these programs until individuals have served 85% of their sentences



701.210.2491



info@f5project.org



www.f5project.org



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Fargo, ND 58102

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would significantly diminish engagement, reduce incentives, and hinder effective planning for those who will eventually be released.

While the intention of the bill centers on public and officer safety, evidence from other states indicates that the opposite effect may occur. Personally, I have been convicted of crimes that, under this bill, would have mandated lengthy prison sentences and required me to serve 85% of my time. However, I have never been incarcerated because current laws empower judges to make individualized decisions based on the unique circumstances of each case. I was fortunate enough to be granted the opportunity for treatment instead of prison. As a result, I am proud to say that I have turned my life around, founded a nonprofit that has successfully helped many individuals reintegrate into society following brief stints in jail or prison, and recently received a pardon from Governor Burgum, with unanimous approval from the pardon advisory board.

Thank you for considering the implications of this bill and its potential impact on our communities and the individuals within them.

Adam Martin, Founder and CEO of F5 Project

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Martin'.



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