

Testimony in support of:

HOUSE BILL NO. 1404: A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15-10 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to a peace officer student loan forgiveness program

Submitted by:

Anthony Hauf

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Dear Rep. Owens, Rep. Schreiber-Beck, and members of the House Education Committee,

I am Anthony Hauf, a Correctional Officer from Willow City, ND. My testimony is in support of HB 1404 in regards to starting a Student Loan Forgiveness program with the Bank of North Dakota. I believe that HB 1404 can help the state of North Dakota in hiring, retaining, and investing in quality law enforcement. With the passing of HB 1404 more officers with loans from Bank of North Dakota will look for law enforcement jobs in North Dakota. Officers will also be motivated to stay in their current/future law enforcement jobs if they have support to help pay their student loans. I would like to believe that with a higher retention rate North Dakota law enforcement agency will be able direct funding from new officer training to other areas that are needed.

I would like the Education Committee to consider adding "correctional facility staff" to the HB 1404. The way HB 1404 is currently written only "Peace Officers" are being considered and not "correctional facility staff". According to **NDCC 12-63-01(3)** "Peace officer" means a public servant authorized by law or by government agency or branch to enforce the law and to conduct or engage in investigations of violations of the law. While according to **NDCC 12-44.1-01(4)** "Correctional facility staff" means correctional personnel with titles such as jailer, deputy, counselor, correctional officer, or any other title, whose duties include the ongoing supervision of inmates in a correctional facility.

Myself along with other correctional facility staff is part of the criminal justice system that has to supervise 24/7, individuals that have been arrested/prosecuted. The staff maintain security by settling disputes between inmates, preventing disturbances, assaults, and escapes. The officers, while being armed/trained, are also able to transport prisoners between the correctional facility and courtrooms, medical facilities, and other destinations. Please note that some correctional facilities not only supervise city, county, and state inmates. They can also supervise federal inmates if that facility has federal contracts with agencies, such as United States Marshal Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs. Correctional facility staff with advanced training or college educations can also be utilized in the rehabilitation and counseling of offenders.

Also please put into your consideration of HB 1404 that correctional officers are also not part of **NDCC 15-10-18.5. Free tuition in North Dakota institutions of higher education for survivor of firefighter, emergency medical services personnel, or peace officer.**

Thank You for your consideration,

Anthony Hauf