

Testimony in Support: House Bill 1417

House Government and Veterans Committee

Chairman Kasper

Erica Thunder, Commissioner, North Dakota Department of Labor and Human Rights

02/04/2021

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Committee,

My name is Erica Thunder, and I serve as the Commissioner for the North Dakota Department of Labor and Human Rights. I am here today to speak in favor and support of HB 1417. This Bill has been long in the works and its drafters have been extremely particular in making sure its language encompasses the needs for entering into mutual aid and/or memorandums of understanding (MOU) agreements, in order to ensure cybersecurity incidents can be resolved as quickly and safely as possible.

I testify today because this Bill is exceedingly important to particularly, the Labor industry. Even a few minutes of a cyber-attack can put an entity, particularly in business, at extreme risk for loss of work and other major issues of confidential work, information, etc. This type of scenario would affect both employer and employee, along with potential entities doing business. The Department believes this risk is too great and would like to see assurance that people doing business in North Dakota do not have to worry about such instances.

We in North Dakota are extremely blessed and fortunate to have a world-renown team working in Cybersecurity under North Dakota Information Technology (ND IT), particularly with Mr. Kevin Ford as Chief Information Security Officer (CISO). I would feel highly comfortable knowing we have the option, if we would ever choose to utilize

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it, to enter into MOUs with some of our partners in other states. For so many of us in Labor, our worlds have changed, many of us are working in databases solely online, instead of on paper. The protection of this Bill is highly needed.

On another personal note, I am a citizen of the MHA Nation, and I believe the language of this Bill as written, has been very well done, in the events that one of the Tribal Nations with whom we share territory with, would also suffer some type of cyber security attack. This has already happened in this State. And the breach affected North Dakota citizens who also happen to be Tribal citizens.

This Bill has been very well written, is concise, and could have a huge impact in whether we have the ability to respond to a cyber security act.

For all of these reasons, I support HB 1417 and ask for a do pass.

If I am unable to answer a specific question today, I will promptly work to provide an answer to the Committee.

Thank you,

Erica Thunder

Erica Thunder, JD
Commissioner
North Dakota Department of Labor and Human Rights