



North Dakota AFL-CIO

1323 East Front Ave.

Bismarck ND 58504

llarson@ndaflcio.org

701-526-8787

**Testimony of Landis Larson, ND AFL-CIO President
In Support of HB 1262
January 18, 2021**

Chairman Lefor and members of the House Industry, Business and Labor:

My name is Landis Larson, President of the North Dakota AFL-CIO. The North Dakota AFL-CIO is the federation of labor unions in North Dakota, representing the interests of all working people in our state.

I am testifying on behalf of the North Dakota AFL-CIO in support of House Bill 1262.

Previous to the pandemic, our unions were some of the most ardent supporters of whistleblower protections for working people in North Dakota, and our current public health crisis during the pandemic has only further demonstrated the need for strong, reliable whistleblower protections.

These protections are vital to ensuring that workers are not only safeguarded from retaliation from unscrupulous employers that would punish workers for standing up for workplace safety, but also benefits everyone in the workplace, including employers by ensuring a collaborative approach to safety. Everyone wins when everyone feels comfortable to speak up when something is unsafe in the workplace.

Unfortunately, we have heard of many stories throughout the pandemic from workers across a variety of our industries in North Dakota that have been threatened with retaliation or fear retaliation from their employers for speaking up about unsafe workplace practices, especially regarding infectious diseases. This puts the good employers that are playing by the rules at a competitive disadvantage to the bad actors that will cut corners and put working people's health and even lives at risk to make a profit. HB 1262 would clearly send a message to working people that they have a right to speak up when an unsafe workplace situation arises, and a message to employers that they must play by the rules when it comes to safety.

I recommend a "Do Pass" on House Bill 1262.

Respectfully Submitted,
Landis Larson
North Dakota AFL-CIO President