

Chairman Lefor, members of the House Industry, Business and Labor Committee, my name is Barry Nelson, I live in Fargo, North Dakota, and I am here on behalf of the North Dakota Human Rights Coalition to urge a do pass on HB 1442.

North Dakota Human Rights Coalition is a statewide, membership (representing the interests of over 5000 North Dakotans) based non-profit formed in 2002 to advocate and educate on human rights. Our mission is to “effect change so that all people in North Dakota enjoy full human rights.” Safe and secure housing is one of the most fundamental of needs that an individual or family has. It is the base to the right to an adequate living standard.

We know that a significant and growing number of people in North Dakota experience home insecurity and homelessness. North Dakota has one of the highest percentages of residents who rent to provide for their housing. The pandemic with the attendant problems of work hours reduction or sudden lay-offs in many industries has only placed an extraordinary pressure on working individuals and families.

HB1442 is not a panacea or a single solution to North Dakota’s housing problem. But, it does address a fundamental need for humanity and fairness. We are not calling for an elimination of consequences for late rental payments. We are calling for a consequence that is reasonable. We are urging a rental cap so that the penalties for late rent payments do not in themselves unduly create evictions and the threat of homelessness.

Please vote do pass on HB 1442.