

January 12, 2021

House Judiciary Committee

HB 1104

Rep. Lawrence R. Klemin, Chair

For the record, I am Stephanie Dassinger. I am appearing on behalf of the Chiefs of Police Association of North Dakota. I am also the deputy director and attorney for the North Dakota League of Cities.

The Chiefs of Police appear today in opposition to HB 1104. The North Dakota Chiefs of Police Association believes reducing the percentage of sentenced time that an offender must serve for murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, kidnapping, gross sexual imposition (rape), robbery, and burglary sends the wrong message and disregards the will of the people of North Dakota. Alternatives to incarceration and sentence reductions have their place. These serious offenses do not warrant those alternatives.

It is the Chiefs' experience that probation and parole revocations are occurring less frequently, for various reasons. Additionally, drug crimes and lower-level violent crimes are receiving lighter and lighter sentences. The Chiefs believe these two realities are conditioning repeat offenders to be more emboldened. Alternative programs are limited or non-existent for even low-level offenses. The Chiefs believe if this bill passes, and North Dakota's most dangerous offenders are routinely released early with little accountability, it will lead to tragic yet predictable outcomes.

Please note that this bill also adds the offenses of continuous sexual abuse of a child, human trafficking, labor trafficking and sexual servitude to the list of offenses where an offender must serve a minimum percentage of his or her imposed sentence. The Chiefs do not oppose that change in the bill.

For the reasons state above, the Chiefs of Police request a Do Not Pass recommendation on HB 1104.

Thank you for your consideration.