



Amy Stetzel
Director, Upper Midwest
CSH

February 7, 2021

The Honorable Larry Klemin
Chair, North Dakota House Committee on Judiciary
600 East Boulevard Avenue, Room JW327B
Bismarck, ND 58501

Dear Representative Klemin,

On behalf of Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), I am writing in support of HB 1443 - Identify and Report Bias Based Crimes. The bill would protect victims of a bias-motivated crime in aggravated assault, harassment, and criminal mischief; which is a critical first step toward protecting all community members and dismantling a long history of interpersonal and institutional discrimination and racism.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the perpetuation of racialized and cultural bias and their deadly consequences in our society. Racism and xenophobic hysteria showed up early in the pandemic crisis in the treatment of people of Chinese heritage. Black individuals seeking justice against racial violence and oppression were further targeted for demanding that their lives matter.

North Dakota is only 1 of 5 states in the U.S. without hate crime legislation. If we cannot begin to address the basic protections for those who have become victims of hate crimes, then we will never get to the deeper work of creating a more just and equitable society where all people are able to thrive.

Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPoC) are over-represented in national and North Dakota homelessness, child welfare, and justice statistics due to the historical legacy and persistence of structural racismⁱ. The biases that have kept us from protecting victims of hate crimes, have further exacerbated the disparities that we see across the systems that are often meant to protect the most vulnerable.

CSH supports this bill as a tool (first step) to address the compounding impacts of interpersonal and institutional racism and discrimination and urges you to pass HB 1443.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Stetzel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Amy Stetzel
Director, Upper Midwest
CSH

ⁱ See CSH's Racial Disparities and Disproportionality Index for more information: <https://www.csh.org/supportive-housing-101/data/>