

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1443**

**Related to Hate/Bias crime,**

**House Judiciary Committee**

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Submitted by Cheryl Kary, Ph.D.

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Chairperson and members of the Committee:

My name is Cheryl Kary and I am the Executive Director of the Sacred Pipe Resource Center, a local non-profit serving the American Indian population in Bismarck-Mandan and Lincoln. I would like to offer this testimony in support of HB1443, relating to the addition of definitions and procedures for bias/hate crimes in North Dakota.

In its annual report on national hate crime statistics, the FBI found that murders classified as hate crimes more than doubled from 2018 to 2019, representing a surge to the highest level since 2008. That total includes 7,103 hate crime incidents involving a single identified type of bias and 211 incidents involving more than one type. You may think that we do not need a bias/hate crime section in the NDCC because it wouldn't happen to you. But this is not about you but about the constituents you serve that may be the victims of such crimes.

What we know about hate crimes is that they are an extreme form of prejudice made more likely in the context of social and political change. We also know that hate/bias crimes cause higher levels of psychological distress for victims, including PTSD, than other violent crimes and that has a higher cost on society. Finally, we know that we are currently living in a time of "social and political change", we are living in a State with a lot of prejudice toward outsiders, and we have a history of unresolved conflict between racial groups. Unfortunately, we also have a history of refusing to discuss, address, or face these issues. This does not mean they are not a part of our experience in this State. By including bias/hate crimes in our NDCC, we are sending a clear signal that we value diversity and the inherent human value of every person, regardless of outward differences.

I encourage you to support HB1443 and the additional protection it will provide for the citizens of this State.