

Testimony Presented on HB 1443 to the

House Judiciary Committee

Representative Lawrence R. Klemin, Chairman

Dr. Timothy J. Mahoney, Mayor for City of Fargo
Matuor Alier, Chair of Human Relations Commission
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Chairman Klemin, members of the House Judiciary Committee, we wish to speak in support of HB 1443. We recognize that hate crimes happen in our community and our state. According to the FBI, there were 14 reported hate crimes in North Dakota for 2019.

North Dakota is one of four states without hate crime legislation. This legislation would provide equal protection for all North Dakota residents, visitors, and workers.

We know that law enforcement including rank, file and leadership of the Fargo Police Department support state hate/bias crime legislation as it would provide law enforcement additional options to address and hold accountable those who would commit a crime based on someone's protected status.

A strong aspect of this bill is the fact that protected communities are enumerated. Any resident could be subject to a hate crime, but it is important that communities known to be at higher risk are clearly listed. Members of communities of color, of minority religion, of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender, of communities of people with disabilities are known to receive the greatest amount of hate directed at them.

We also support the importance HB 1443 places upon data collection and training of members of law enforcement. As much as we are encouraged and support the efforts of the Fargo Police Department to address this need, we recognize the importance of consistency throughout the state and believe appropriations to support the implementation of the measure will aid law enforcement agencies.

We recognize that hate crime goes largely unreported. The reasons for this are that many people do not know of their rights, they may fear retaliation, or they do not believe their community would support them.

Our strongest basis for supporting HB1443 is the belief that ALL residents of our community and our state have a right to live with safety and security and without fear. Passing HB1443 sends a clear and inconvertible message: our communities do not sanction hate at any level.