

Chairman Klemin and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1443.

I am currently serving in my third term on the Grand Forks City Council. While I am not writing in an official capacity as an elected official, I am writing in relation to my role some eight years ago when, as a member of the Council, I supported the work that helped Grand Forks to become the first city in the state to support action similar to the current HB 1443.

At that time, Grand Forks acted to protect the housing and employment rights of persons regardless of their perceived race, color, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, or ancestry.

Doing so has not resulted in frivolous or excessive legal action. Instead, it sent a clear message that Grand Forks supports policies and practices respectful of difference, and in doing so the city presents itself as a welcoming community.

That action supported workforce and economic development. HB 1443 will provide similar benefit for the State of North Dakota.

Additionally, I am proud of the fair-minded attitude of law enforcement officers in my community. At the same time, I recognize that they are vulnerable to lawsuits and other legal actions resulting from the difficult decisions they must make in their day-to-day responsibilities. HB 1443 will help to assure that peace officers receive the training necessary for their professional obligations, and that training will also be useful support in the event of legal action taken against officers accused of ignoring or otherwise violating the civil rights of individuals.

Thank you for your service to our state, its communities, and to law enforcement professionals across North Dakota, and thank you for your consideration to support of HB 1443.

Sincerely,

Bret A. Weber
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