

TESTIMONY OF REP. LAWRENCE R. KLEMIN  
HOUSE BILL NO. 1036  
SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 10, 2021

Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. I am Lawrence R. Klemin, Representative from District 47 in Bismarck. I am here to testify in support of House Bill No. 1036, which requests Legislative Management to consider studying the juvenile justice process and to collaborate with the North Dakota Commission on Juvenile Justice.

The Commission on Juvenile Justice was created during in the 2019 Session to review all facets of juvenile justice and child welfare in North Dakota and is comprised of a member from the North Dakota Supreme Court, the Juvenile Court, several agencies of state and local government, and six members of the Legislature who were appointed from the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. One of the primary duties of the Commission was to review the Juvenile Court Act.

HB 1036 is a continuation of a study of the juvenile justice process conducted during the 2017-2018 and 2019-2020 interims. As a result of the most recent study, the interim Judiciary Committee, in collaboration with the Commission on Juvenile Justice, drafted HB 1035 to reorganize and update the Juvenile Court Act contained in Chapter 27-20 of the North Dakota Century Code. Chapter 27-20 is based on the Uniform Juvenile Court Act of 1968, which was enacted in North Dakota in 1969. Although there have been some amendments to this chapter over time, it was basically the same as originally introduced in 1969 and needed to be updated.

HB 1035 is a lengthy bill to reorganize and update the Juvenile Court Act to include best practices for juvenile justice. The bill includes several delayed effective dates in order to allow the schools, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the Juvenile Court, and other interested parties and entities, time to plan and implement best practices in working with the juvenile justice process in this State. HB 1427 is a companion bill to HB 1035 and establishes three planning committees to research and develop plans for implementation of HB 1035. HB 1036, this study resolution, will allow the Legislature to continue to work with the Commission on Juvenile Justice during the next interim on the implementation of the Juvenile Court Act.

The Legislature and the Commission on Juvenile Justice have worked well together over the past two years in a partnership to revise and update the Juvenile Court Act. There is still work to be done, so we need to continue that partnership.

I urge you to recommend passage of HB 1036 to the Senate.