

HB 1130 Testimony

Senate Judiciary Committee

Representative Mike Lefor

Good afternoon, Chair Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is Mike Lefor and I represent District 37 – Dickinson in the House. I bring HB 1130 to you on behalf of the Municipal Court system in the state. The idea behind this bill is to give municipal courts in the state the ability to collect unpaid fines or penalties through the civil process.

Currently, the court may attempt to collect the fines through an order to show cause and bench warrant for the individual's arrest. Further, they may face jail sentences for non-compliance. This is a cumbersome and sometimes difficult process requiring more time and effort in attempting to collect these fines.

A considerable amount of time of a municipal judge is spent on efforts to collect amounts determined to be owing as fines or penalties. Some of those amounts are substantial. This increases the costs to the city as they attempt to enforce those judgments even though they do not always collect what is owed.

In the communities of Dickinson, Bismarck, Mandan and Rugby, the outstanding amount owed is in excess of \$1,000,000.00. The association would like to have the option of collecting criminal judgments through the civil process. This would make the process of collecting unpaid fines more affordable and less time consuming.

This bill has been amended to make the process better for all concerned and I support the amendment which will be proposed by the League of Cities. The bill lowers costs and allows for more efficiency in collecting unpaid fines.

With that, members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I would respectfully request a do pass recommendation and I would stand for any questions.