

Chairwoman Larson & Members of the Committee,

I would like to say thank you for the opportunity to provide the committee with testimony regarding Senate Bill 2168. I come before you as a member of the Grand Forks City Council representing the wonderful citizens of Ward 1, which also encompasses a large portion of the University of North Dakota campus. I would also like to inform you that I do work full time as the Investigations Commander for the University of North Dakota Police Department but am speaking on behalf of my role as a council member.

As an elected official who happens to work in law enforcement, I often see how the policies and laws that we put in place have an impact on the communities we represent. I often ask myself is this policy good for the community and in this particular case will it have an impact on making the community safer.

I truly believe that Senate Bill 2168 does both by addressing concerns from recent court decisions regarding impaired drivers (and other type of crimes) that happen to turn a few feet outside the outlined jurisdiction. This bill also addresses any safety concerns that university and community members may have on property that happens to be right next door to the university campus. Contrary to what some may say, this bill doesn't expand jurisdiction for UND Police Officers it only affords them the ability to enhance the safety of students and community members near the University of North Dakota.

I would like to provide you with an example of how UND Police Officers must handle situations that might be as little as 2 feet outside of the boundaries set forth. Loaf and Jug Gas station is located at the corner of University and North 42nd Street. Currently the UND Police Department has the authority to enforce state law on property located at 3 of the 4 corners of that intersection. In September of 2019, two masked men entered the Loaf and Jug Gas station, that is often frequented by UND students, and robbed the store at gun point. Officers from the UND Police Department were the first to arrive on scene due to the close proximity to the UND campus. In this situation, Officers from the UND Police Department must contact Grand Forks Central Dispatch to ask if the Grand Forks Police Department would like to request mutual aid for them to assist. Grand Forks Central Dispatchers then would contact the on duty Grand Forks Police Department Sergeant and inform him of the situation. The Grand Forks Police Department Sergeant would then say yes or no for the mutual aid request. At that point the dispatcher would then inform UND Police Officers of the decision. This process could take anywhere from 30 seconds to a minute and a half or more all while leaving a victim waiting on law enforcement officers that could be seconds away ready to act. Officers acting without the authority could have significant liability concerns.

This is just one example of how a small change to current law could have a big impact on the safety and well-being of the UND and Grand Forks Communities. I appreciate your time regarding this bill and would stand for any questions the committee may have.

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Grand Forks City Council
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