

Thank you Chairman and members of the committee for allowing me to speak today. My name is Hanna Johnson and I'm grateful to be speaking to my home state in favor of HB 1518.

Today, I am here to advocate for survivors of sexual violence. I do not speak for only myself, but of the more than 125,000 survivors in the state of North Dakota. I am asking you to see us, to hear us, and to help us change the law.

I have been formally working to secure justice for survivors of sexual violence for seven months across the nation, but it is now a source of pride and joy for me that I can testify in favor of this bill in the state that raised me.

Sexual violence is an epidemic in every state in the United States of America, and legislation is needed now to act on this. The law as it currently stands often causes survivors to feel re-traumatized. While we can't make the experience of an assault any easier, we can help survivors feel a little less burdened by our judicial system. Every additional right is important, and I believe that is why this bill is essential. Survivors deserve to know that their state legislature supports them, and even the inclusion of one or two more rights could be life-changing for a survivor who wants to pursue justice.

Today, you have a chance to make history by helping to improve the lives of survivors. You have the opportunity to join 40 other states, two separate sets of the U.S. Congress, and the United Nations in guaranteeing these rights for survivors. Sexual violence transcends party lines and it affects all of us in some capacity. To improve the way that survivors experience the justice system after trauma, action is needed now. I stand with survivors. Do you?

Thank you for your time!