

**Support SB 2202
North Dakota House Judiciary Committee**

March 6, 2023

Chairman Klemin and members of the House Judiciary Committee, my name is Kristie Wolff, I am the Communications and Engagement Coordinator for Central Dakota Forensic Nurse Examiners (CDFNE).

I am testifying today in support of SB 2202.

CDFNE is a North Dakota based non-profit organization providing forensic medical services to children and adult survivors of sexual assault in western North Dakota. Our organization serves individuals in 23 counties, with our headquarters in Bismarck. CDFNE nurses work with a variety of partners including law enforcement, advocacy agencies, and children’s advocacy centers, as part of local sexual assault response teams. CDFNE currently has 22 Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners on staff who work throughout our service area.

Our state’s Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE), including our team at CDFNE, are specially trained to provide trauma-informed care to victims of sexual assault. This unique medical care is an interdisciplinary specialty combining nursing, forensic science, and the legal system.

In December of 2022, CDFNE executive director Tisha Scheuer and myself, met with Attorney General Drew Wrigley and Deputy Attorney General Claire Ness. Our meeting included a discussion about the current services we provide and the lack of access to forensic medical services for victims of domestic violence and physical abuse. This discussion led to their support of our organization working with policymakers to bring forward a bill for a pilot program.

Currently, the Attorney General's office oversees the Sexual Assault Forensic Nurse Examiners grant program, therefore they have the mechanisms in place, including a grant review committee, to administer this program.

It is time to expand forensic medical services in North Dakota. SB 2202 implements a grant-based program in our state to help provide these services to victims of domestic violence and physical abuse. These victims deserve access to the same forensic medical services as victims of sexual assault.

Therefore, today I am asking you to give a DO PASS recommendation to SB 2202.

Thank you,
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