

Thank you, Madam Chair, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

My name is Austen Schauer, representing District 13 in West Fargo.

I am here today seeking your support of **House Bill 1143**.

What is the definition of **theft**?

According to Webster, it's the **action or crime of stealing**.

That may not be as obvious as you may think.

Last Fall, I was contacted by an Equipment and Supply business in Fargo. It sells and rents construction equipment.

A man had rented some equipment valued at more than **40 thousand dollars**.

The rental payment agreement was set up with a credit card.

That worked fine for about three months and then the man **stopped** paying.

His credit card was repeatedly declined.

The phone number given to the rental company was **disconnected** and communication ended.

When the company contacted police, they said, "Sorry we can't do anything."

Why can't you?

"Because this kind of theft is considered a civil matter because of a rental contract."