



## **Bonnie P. Humphrey, Attorney at Law**

---

**1344 South Main Street, P.O. Box 2045, Minot, North Dakota 58702**

Licensed in North Dakota and Minnesota

Licensed in the District of North Dakota - Federal Court

Licensed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth District

Licensed in the Supreme Court of the United States

Office and Text: (701) 852-5777

Email: [bonnie@ndfamilylaw.com](mailto:bonnie@ndfamilylaw.com)

February 11, 2025

To: 69<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly

In regard to House Bill 1609

Dear 69<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly:

I am writing to express my concerns regarding House Bill 1609, which proposes allowing admission to the bar examination through an apprenticeship program. If this bill were to pass, there would be no guarantee that apprentices would be adequately qualified to practice law in North Dakota. This could undermine the rigorous standards that the University of North Dakota (UND) School of Law has established to ensure its graduates are well-prepared to practice law in the state.

The public could be directly harmed by this bill, as there would be no assurance that an apprentice is well-rounded in all areas of law, beyond any specific specialty they may practice. Additionally, it is troubling that the bill appears to allow a particular class of people, namely state legislators serving more than four years, to bypass law school attendance, effectively giving them a "free pass."

I passed the bar after attending UND School of Law over thirty years ago, and the experience I gained there cannot be replicated in terms of quality, concern for students, and the detailed care provided. The experiences I have had over these years are irreplaceable, and would not have been possible without the UND School of Law.

Today marks the 800th anniversary of the final iteration of the Magna Carta, which was the forerunner to our Constitution. The Magna Carta's significance for lawyers

February 11, 2025

Page 2 of 2

lies in its establishment of key legal principles such as due process, access to justice, and the rule of law, which have profoundly influenced both historical and contemporary legal systems. Lawyers work hard, engage in many activities in law school which are simply not the same anywhere else, and face many challenges in the process of passing the rigorous bar examination. There is a reason for this: to ensure that attorneys are deeply committed to the ongoing, day-to-day practice in the interest of justice for everyone. The honor of being a lawyer should not be treated lightly and the process to become one cannot be shortchanged.

**Please do not pass this bill.**

Respectfully Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bonnie P. Humphrey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bonnie" being more prominent and the last name "Humphrey" following in a similar style.

Bonnie P. Humphrey  
Attorney and Counselor at Law