

February 3, 2025

From: Sergeant Dustin Miller – Bismarck Police Department
To: House Judiciary Committee
Re: Opposition to House Bill 1613

Chairman Klemin and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Sergeant Dustin Miller, and I am here to express the Bismarck Police Department's strong opposition to House Bill 1613, which pertains to the use of drones and robots by law enforcement. I urge you to vote **DO NOT PASS** on this bill.

I have served as a law enforcement officer for over 18 years, and for the past two years, I have been the Commander of the Bismarck Police Department's Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Team. Our use of drones in response to calls for service and critical incidents has significantly enhanced safety—not only for citizens and law enforcement officers but also for the individuals involved in these incidents. Public safety must remain the primary concern when deploying equipment and tactics to address emergencies effectively.

I recognize that there can sometimes be a disconnect between public perception and the actual use of drones by law enforcement. Our department utilizes drones to document accident scenes with greater speed and accuracy, clear residences when responding to emergency calls, and provide situational awareness during critical incidents, such as SWAT operations involving barricaded subjects. Drones serve as a vital tool for enhancing efficiency, reducing risk, and de-escalating volatile situations before deploying personnel.

Law enforcement officers frequently respond to rapidly evolving, high-risk situations. The ability to deploy a drone to safely assess an area—such as locating a fleeing suspect or scanning a structure before entry—has become a critical component of modern policing. Imposing restrictions that eliminate or require a warrant for drone use would significantly compromise public and officer safety. The warrant application process for critical incidents and emergency calls often takes two to three hours, making drone deployment impractical in many urgent situations.

North Dakota already has a law in place—**NDCC 29-29.4: Surveillance by Unmanned Aerial Vehicle**—which mandates a warrant for drone surveillance unless exigent circumstances exist. This existing regulation strikes an appropriate balance between privacy rights and public safety. With proper training and legal oversight, law enforcement agencies in North Dakota are currently utilizing drones in a responsible and justified manner.

For these reasons, I strongly urge a **DO NOT PASS** vote on House Bill 1613.

Thank you for your time and consideration.


Sergeant Dustin Miller
Bismarck Police Department