

Senate Bill No. 2209
House Judiciary Committee
Testimony Presented Seth O'Neill, JD, MSW
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Chairman Klemin and members of the House Judiciary Committee, my name is Seth O'Neill and I am representing the North Dakota Domestic & Sexual Violence Coalition in support of SB 2209.

This bill would modify the language in the acute forensic medical examination portion of the North Dakota Century Code to include domestic violence crimes in addition to sexual violence related crimes which are already in law. Acute forensic medical examinations for domestic violence crimes can provide important evidence to be used in a criminal trial. After approving a pilot program last legislative session, we think it is important to now include domestic violence crimes in the acute forensic medical examination reimbursement program.

In addition, this bill would make an important change in allowing a provider to seek reimbursement for an exam that is conducted within 120 hours of the crime instead of the current 96 hours. Acute forensic medical examinations conducted within 120 hours of a crime can still yield valuable DNA evidence. It is important that providers be encouraged to collect DNA evidence within this timeframe. NDDSVCS in conjunction with the North Dakota Attorney General's Office is in the process of finalizing the sixth edition of the North Dakota Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Protocol. The sixth edition of the protocol also supports the increase to timeframe for acute forensic medical examinations.

Due to these reasons, we encourage the committee to give SB 2209 a Do-Pass Recommendation. I appreciate your time and I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank You.

