



Representative Nels Christianson

District 18
1002 Belmont Road
Grand Forks, ND, 58201-5621
nchristianson@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:

Judiciary
Transportation

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Chairman Larson and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I am Nels Christianson, and I am honored to represent District 18, which includes central and northern parts of the City of Grand Forks, Manvel, and northeast Grand Forks County.

This morning, I bring HB 1263 before this committee to open a clearer pathway to redemption and renewal for those who have a criminal conviction in their past and can demonstrate reformation and rehabilitation. This bill proposes making sealing criminal records more accessible to a petitioner if a petition has been previously denied.

An individual who has been convicted of a crime faces significant barriers to employment and services. The purpose of this bill is to reduce those barriers to a person with a criminal history who has completed all the provisions of his or her sentence and demonstrated reformation to have that criminal record sealed. By sealing this record, this bill will open employment and housing options to petitioners which will help each individual achieve a productive life and reduce the potential for recidivism.

The amended version of this bill that I bring before you gives recourse to an individual whose petition to seal a criminal record has been denied. It allows a petitioner to appeal a petition that has been denied in court. It also enables an individual with a denied petition to file a new petition after one year.

Please consider that this bill does not impede the ability of a prosecutor or court to consider a prior, sealed conviction for sentencing enhancements.

Chairman Larson and Members of the Committee, I encourage you to recommend DO PASS on HB 1263 to lower the bar for individuals who have been convicted, completed all terms of their sentence, and demonstrated reformation to move on with their lives.