

January 8, 2025

Senate Judiciary Committee
SB 2083

MADAME CHAIRMAN LARSON AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

My name is Cecile Wehrman. I represent the North Dakota Newspaper Association and the state's 73 member newspapers. Please accept this written testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 2083 as currently composed.

No news organization would have need or desire to publish images of nudity, grotesque injury or deceased individuals, however, we believe Section 2 should contain a qualifier as it relates to body worn camera video if release of such video is exculpatory to an issue related to officer conduct on the scene.

One of the central functions of body worn cameras by law enforcement or other emergency personnel is to create a record of actions taken by public servants. In a case in which it is alleged responder conduct was inappropriate, the release of these now exempt records would be at the sole discretion of the agency, creating the potential for the provision to be used to shield responders from scrutiny if they did something wrong.

We would support the inclusion of language addressing this concern such as:

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

On line 18, after the words "exempt record," insert "unless it contains evidence of responder misconduct"

Renumber accordingly.

Thank you for your time and consideration.