



North Dakota Senate

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COMMITTEES:

Judiciary
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Good morning, Chair Larson and members of the Judiciary Committee.

I stand before you today to present Senate Bill 2238, a piece of legislation that seeks to address a critical issue regarding renters in our state: the expungement/Sealing of eviction records, particularly for individuals who have faced domestic violence.

This bill proposes a pathway for individuals to petition for the removal of eviction records after seven years of satisfying the order. More importantly, it provides immediate removal for victims of domestic violence upon the conviction of their assailant or the issuance of protective orders.

The purpose of this bill is twofold: to allow individuals a fresh start after fulfilling their obligations and to ensure that survivors of domestic violence are not further penalized by eviction records stemming from abusive circumstances. Too often, these records create long-term barriers to housing stability, employment opportunities, and overall security.

After discussing with the courts, I have made clarifying changes to the bill. One, the court has recommended using the term Sealed instead of expungement. This term is rarely used in the court system.

Secondly, we want to clarify in section one of the bill that this only applies to evictions for non-payment of rent or damages, and they can't have a new eviction within 7 years.

Lastly, providing clarity in subsection two that the eviction has to result from a Domestic Violence act.

By enacting this legislation, North Dakota takes a meaningful step toward fairness in the legal system—balancing accountability with compassion. I urge this committee to consider this bill's impact on individuals seeking a second chance and survivors reclaiming their independence.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to address any questions you may have.