

2025 HOUSE JUDICIARY

HB 1030

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Judiciary Committee Room JW327B, State Capitol

HB 1030
1/8/2025

Relating to changing drug court to treatment court.

3:00 p.m. Chairman Klemin called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Lawrence R. Klemin, Vice-Chairman Karen Karls, Vice-Chairman Steve Vetter, Representatives Nels Christianson, Donna Henderson, Jeff Hoverson, Daniel Johnston, Carrie McLeod, SuAnn Olson, Bernie Satrom, Bill Tveit, Lori VanWinkle, Christina Wolff, Mary Schneider

Discussion Topics:

- The destigmatization of drugs
- Drug treatment process
- Effectiveness of the drug court
- Substances treated in drug court

3:01 p.m. Scott Johnson, Deputy State Court Administrator, testified in favor and provided testimony #28120.

3:13 p.m. Travis Finck, Executive Director for the North Dakota Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents, testified in favor and provided testimony #28154.

3:16 p.m. Chairman Klemin closed the hearing.

3:17 p.m. Representative Vetter moved for a Do Pass.

3:17 p.m. Representative VanWinkle seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Lawrence R. Klemin	Y
Representative Karen Karls	Y
Representative Steve Vetter	Y
Representative Nels Christianson	Y
Representative Donna Henderson	Y
Representative Jeff Hoverson	Y
Representative Daniel Johnston	Y
Representative Carrie McLeod	Y
Representative SuAnn Olson	Y
Representative Bernie Satrom	Y
Representative Mary Schneider	Y
Representative Bill Tveit	Y

Representative Lori VanWinkle	Y
Representative Christina Wolff	N

Motion Passed 13-1-0

Representative Mcleod will carry the bill.

3:22 p.m. Chairman Klemin adjourned the meeting.

Wyatt Armstrong, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1030 ([25.0100.01000](#))

Judiciary Committee (Rep. Klemin, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (13 YEAS, 1 NAY, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING), and be placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

HB 1030
House Judiciary Committee
January 8, 2025
Testimony of Scott Johnson

Chair Klemin, members of the House Judiciary Committee, for the record my name is Scott Johnson, I am the deputy state court administrator.

During the 68th legislative assembly, section 55 of SB 2012 was enacted. This section required the supreme court to assess whether the term “wellness court” should be adopted to replace “drug court,” and to identify any statutory changes required to implement the change. In undertaking the study, the supreme court was required to consult with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR), the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and the Attorney General.

Most adult drug courts are budgeted for and staffed by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation rather than the judicial branch where the juvenile drug courts reside. Treatment services for adult and juvenile drug court are provided by the Department of Health and Human Services through a memorandum of understanding for each court.

The supreme court refers to these courts as "specialized dockets". A specialized docket is juvenile or district court that oversees a therapeutic program comprised of interdisciplinary teams, enhanced judicial involvement, court-supervised treatment programs, and other components designed to achieve effective alternatives to traditional case dispositions. There are both adult and juvenile specialized dockets within the North Dakota Court system.

Pursuant to legislative requirements, we convened a small workgroup that included retired Judge John Grinsteiner from the South Central Judicial District who has been instrumental in working with our drug

courts and is a nationally known resource on this topic along with Jessica Throlson who is our Specialized Dockets Manager. As required, we consulted with representatives of DOCR, the DHHS, attorney general's office, judges, juvenile court staff, drug court staff and current adult participants with regard to use of the term wellness court as a substitute for drug court.

As to the term wellness court – it has traditionally been used by some tribal courts in lieu of drug court and to emphasize a focus on the well-being of the entire individual, rather than a narrower focus on treating an individual for a substance abuse disorder. Wellness court has gained some traction in non-tribal courts, most notably in Alaska, Ohio and Indiana. However, the term wellness continues to be narrowly construed as a measure of physical or mental health.

Our findings were presented along with the required draft legislation to the Interim Judiciary Committee. Those surveyed preferred the term treatment to wellness. Most were in favor of setting aside the term drug in relationship to these specialized courts and the word treatment is recommended.

Overall, North Dakota is not unique in this endeavor -- there is a national conversation occurring in this area. We believe that this recommendation will be a positive step toward destigmatizing substance abuse and is consistent with what many other states have done including: Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Pennsylvania, New York, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

I urge a DO PASS recommendation and am available for your questions at this time.

HB 1030
69th Legislative Assembly
House Judiciary Committee
January 8, 2025
Testimony of Travis W. Finck, Executive Director, NDCLCI

Chairman Klemin, members of the House Judiciary Committee, my name is Travis Finck and I am the Executive Director for the North Dakota Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents. The Commission is the state agency responsible for the delivery of indigent defense services in North Dakota. I rise today on behalf of the Commission to provide testimony in support of House Bill 1030.

The Commission on Legal Counsel supports HB 1030 in its attempt to de-stigmatize those individuals who have found themselves in the criminal legal system due to a substance use problem. These Courts have saved lives and promote opportunities for those charged with crimes to make positive changes to their lives.

For the reasons states herein, the Commission supports HB 1030 and respectfully requests a do pass recommendation.

Respectfully Submitted:



Travis W. Finck
Executive Director, NDCLCI

2025 SENATE JUDICIARY

HB 1030

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Judiciary Committee Peace Garden Room, State Capitol

HB 1030
2/17/2025

Relating to changing drug court to treatment court.

10:02 a.m. Chair Larson opened the meeting.

Members present:

Chair Larson, Vice Chairman Paulson, Senators: Castaneda, Cory, Luick, Myrdal, Braunberger.

Discussion Topics:

- Shift from "drug court" to "treatment court"
- Aims to destigmatize substance abuse
- Collaborative efforts with DOCR
- Focus on recovery and reintegration

10:02 a.m. Scott Johnson, Deputy State Court Administrator, submitted testimony in favor #37861.

10:08 a.m. Kimberly K. Jacobson, Director of Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone, submitted testimony in favor #37764.

10:11 a.m. Travis W. Finck, Executive Director of North Dakota Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents, submitted testimony in favor #37803.

10:12 a.m. Chair Larson closed the hearing.

10:12 a.m. Senator Myrdal moved a Do Pass.

10:12 a.m. Senator Castaneda seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Diane Larson	Y
Senator Bob Paulson	Y
Senator Ryan Braunberger	Y
Senator Jose L. Castaneda	Y
Senator Claire Cory	Y
Senator Larry Luick	Y
Senator Janne Myrdal	Y

Motion Passed 7-0-0.

10:13 a.m. Senator Cory will carry the bill.

10:13 a.m. Chair Larson closed the hearing.

Senate Judiciary Committee

HB 1030

2/17/2025

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Kendra McCann, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1030 ([25.0100.01000](#))

Judiciary Committee (Sen. Larson, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (7 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1030 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

Testimony Prepared for the **Senate Judiciary Committee**
February 17, 2025
Kim Jacobson, Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone Director

HB 1030: Related to Treatment Courts

Chair Larson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is Kim Jacobson. I serve as the Director of Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone, which includes the counties of Traill and Steele, and as the President of the North Dakota Human Service Zone Director Association. I am here today to provide testimony in support of House Bill 1030.

Shifting the language in North Dakota Century Code from “drug court” to “treatment court” supports our communities by taking an important step toward destigmatizing substance abuse. It demonstrates an understanding of substance abuse as a treatable health issue, and it emphasizes the restorative goals of North Dakota’s treatment court programs.

Human service zones frequently work alongside individuals who experience or are impacted by alcohol and substance use disorders, so we have witnessed and contributed to the success of recovery and reintegration services in North Dakota. For example, zones partner with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) to support the successful reentry of incarcerated individuals, including those who are incarcerated for drug-related offenses. When possible, we place eligibility workers onsite at correctional facilities to educate inmates about economic assistance programs and support them during the application process. These outreach efforts help ensure that returning citizens have immediate access to economic assistance benefits and continuity of care, which supports lower recidivism rates.

Zones also manage child welfare cases, and zone directors are the legal custodians of children in the public foster care system. When these cases involve alcohol or substance abuse, zones often play a role in addiction recovery. Zone support is tailored to the needs of the individuals we serve, but it may include collaboration with treatment providers to identify relapse triggers or develop safe care plans for children. It may also include service referrals, coordination with probation programs, psychiatric and substance use evaluations, and various forms of economic assistance.

Our experience serving populations affected by addiction has taught us that accurate, destigmatizing language — such as that proposed by HB 1030 — is a critical driver of individual stability, family reunification, and recovery. I respectfully request a “Do Pass” vote on HB 1030. Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. I stand for questions from the committee.

HB 1030
69th Legislative Assembly
Senate Judiciary Committee
February 17, 2025
Testimony of Travis W. Finck, Executive Director, NDCLCI

Madam Chair Larson, members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is Travis Finck and I am the Executive Director for the North Dakota Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents. The Commission is the state agency responsible for the delivery of indigent defense services in North Dakota. I rise today on behalf of the Commission to provide testimony in support of House Bill 1030.

The Commission on Legal Counsel supports HB 1030 in its attempt to de-stigmatize those individuals who have found themselves in the criminal legal system due to a substance use problem. These Courts have saved lives and promote opportunities for those charged with crimes to make positive changes to their lives. This bill adapts best practices in terming the courts as “treatment” courts, as the courts provide for so much more healing than those only suffering from addiction to drugs.

For the reasons states herein, the Commission supports HB 1030 and respectfully requests a do pass recommendation.

Respectfully Submitted:



Travis W. Finck
Executive Director, NDCLCI

HB 1030
Senate Judiciary Committee
February 17, 2025
Testimony of Scott Johnson

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