2025 HOUSE POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS
HB 1193

#### 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

#### **Political Subdivisions Committee**

Room JW327B, State Capitol

HB 1193 1/23/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and correctional officer appreciation grant program.

9:28 a.m. Chairman Longmuir opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Longmuir, Vice-Chairman Fegley, Vice-Chairman Jonas, Representatives Bolinske, Davis, Hager, Hatlestad, Heilman, Klemin, Motschenbacher, Ostlie, Toman, Warrey

#### **Discussion Topics:**

- North Dakota police officer salary
- Police officer retention
- Potential influx in applications for program
- State funding for police officers
- 9:30 a.m. Representative Steve Vetter, North Dakota Representative for District 18, introduced the bill, and provided testimony #30999.
- 9:57 a.m. Donnell Preskey, Executive Director for the North Dakota Sherriff's' and Deputies Association, testified in favor and provided testimony #30808.
- 10:12 a.m. Blaire Thoreson, North Dakota Peace Officers Association, testified in favor.
- 10:14 a.m. Roger Hutchinson, Sheriff in Renville County, testified in favor.
- 10:20 a.m. Stephanie Engebretson, Deputy Director and attorney for the North Dakota League of Cities, testified in favor and provided testimony #30952.
- 10:25 a.m. Chairman Longmuir closed the hearing.

Wyatt Armstrong, Committee Clerk

Testimony prepared for: **House Political Subdivisions** Donnell Preskey, NDACo January 23, 2025



#### Re: HB 1193 – Law Enforcement Appreciation Grants

Chair Longmuir & committee members, I'm Donnell Preskey with North Dakota Association of Counties. In that role, I also serve as executive director of the ND Sheriffs' & Deputies Association (NDSDA). NDSDA stands in support of HB 1193 and asks for your favorable consideration to the important piece of legislation.

At the local level, it is a struggle to recruit and retain law enforcement officers. From conversations with our county Sheriffs across our state, it is a constant battle to fill openings. Sheriffs along with their commissioners do as much as they can to provide competitive salaries and benefits to retain local deputies, but it is very difficult to match state salary and benefits and to neighboring state law enforcement officers.

Anything the state can do to help our counties retain their trained deputies is much appreciated. HB 1193 mirrors an action the Legislature approved in the 2023 Session, with a few differences. HB 1193 is focused on those who have been with the same agency or department for four years or more and includes state law enforcement and corrections.

HB 1307, otherwise known as the Back the Blue Grants, was introduced as being a \$5 million grant and was passed at \$3.5 million distributed to cities and counties for recruitment, retention and training for local law enforcement and local correctional officers. Of the amount, \$750,000 was earmarked for agencies with less than 10 officers. This equated to law enforcement in those smaller agencies receiving \$2,885 per officer and \$1,419 per officer for all other agencies. The intent was for the Sheriff or Chief of Police to have the discretion on how to use those funds and to decide how to distribute to officers.

Based on information from the North Dakota Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board in 2023, there are 1,750 licensed officers employed by city and county agencies. The funds were distributed to 1,260 county employees (735 licensed officers and 525 correctional officers).

Sheriffs are very appreciative of the Back the Blue Grant dollars they received and say they have been beneficial in helping with retention. Some departments used the funds for a recruitment campaign, but most Sheriffs decided to distribute the dollars as a retention bonus soon after they received the funding in late 2023 right before the holidays. Sheriffs have also provided feedback that the Back the Blue grant came at the right time to help boost the morale of law enforcement, sending a message that the State recognizes and appreciates the work our deputies and officers are doing to keep your local communities safe.

January 23, 2025
House Appropriations Committee
HB 1193
Representative Donald W. Longmuir, Chair

For the record, I am Stephanie Dassinger Engebretson, and I am appearing on behalf of the Chiefs of Police Association of North Dakota. I am also the deputy director and attorney for the North Dakota League of Cities.

The Chiefs of Police appear today in support of HB 1193. This bill creates the Peace Officer and Correctional Officer Appreciation Grant Program. Under the program licensed state and political subdivision law enforcement officers and state correctional officers that have been employed with the same employer for at least four years are eligible for a bonus of up to \$6,000 per officer per fiscal year.

Police chiefs often share their concerns about their departments' ability to recruit and retain qualified law enforcement officers. This bill helps address the retention piece so that police departments can incentivize their experienced law enforcement officers to stay with their agency and in law enforcement.

The Chiefs of Police respectfully request a Do Pass recommendation on HB 1193.



# North Dakota House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL 600 EAST BOULEVARD BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



#### Representative Steve Vetter

District 18 804 South 17th Street Grand Forks, ND 58201-4241 smvetter@ndlegis.gov **COMMITTEES:** 

Judiciary (Vice Chair)
Government and Veterans Affairs

Chairman Longmuir and the Judiciary committee,

My name is Steve Vetter, I represent district 18, eastern part of Grand Forks along the Red River. It has a little rural area going as far north as Manvel, ND.

With this bill, We reward those officers who have stuck it out for 4 years in their respective agency get a \$6000 appreciation bonus. The reason the bill only pays when they stay within their respective agencies is to stop agencies from poaching talent from other agencies. In addition, in order to poach from a local community they would now have matching the bonus they'd would be losing.

As of January 2025, the average salary for a police officer in North Dakota was \$65,758 per year, or about \$31.61 per hour. This is 10% below the national average, However, salaries can vary widely, with some earning as little as \$34,388 and others earning as much as \$109,512.

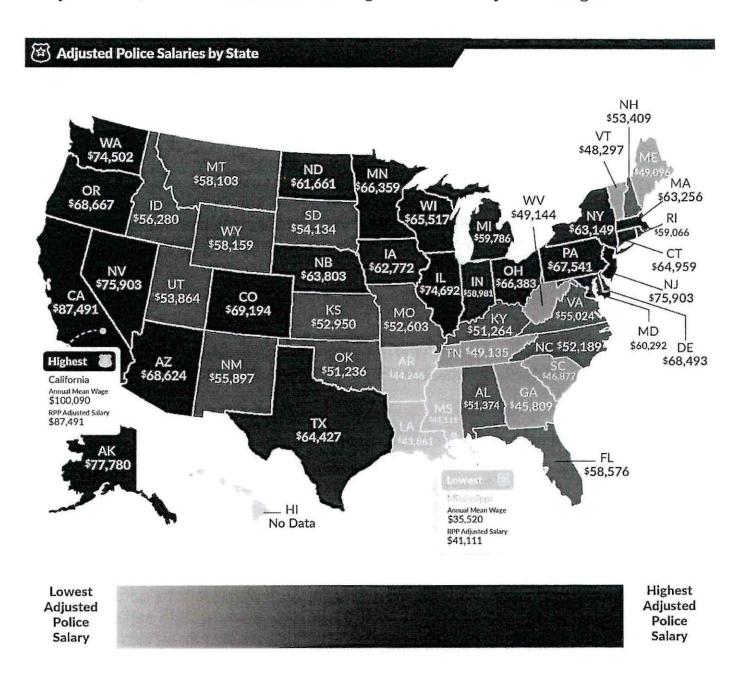
As of now, North Dakota law enforcement are slightly undercompensated when compared to their peers and substantially undercompensated when compared to states in the top 10. According to data, national standards would rank us in the bottom 30% of all states for peace officer compensation.

If you look at the graph at the bottom of this sheet, you will see what the average peace officer is paid in our state compared to the other 50 states.

When we look at our neighbors to our east, they say they want want to 'defund their police' yet on average they pay their officers more a year than us. With half our population on the eastern part of the state, it matters what they pay officers in Minnesota. This bill seeks to bring parity in pay with Minnesota and send a national message that here in North Dakota we 'Fund our police'.

Let's talk about what this bill would do. We wouldn't need to spend anything on advertising to get the message out because if passed, every peace officer will know about it. If we want an advertising campaign, we could have one for free. In addition this marketing would encourage more officers to work in North Dakota.

In general, how much do people save anymore? This is a game changer for a family. A family vacation, an IRA contribution. This a great benefit they won't forget.



### 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

#### **Political Subdivisions Committee**

Room JW327B, State Capitol

HB 1193 1/24/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and correctional officer appreciation grant program; and to provide for a legislative management report.

9:01 a.m. Chairman Longmuir opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Longmuir, Vice-Chairman Fegley, Vice-Chairman Jonas, Representatives Bolinske, Davis, Hager, Hatlestad, Heilman, Klemin, Motschenbacher, Ostlie, Warrey

Members Absent: Representative Toman

### **Discussion Topics:**

Peace Officer recruitment and retention

9:02 a.m. Committee discussion on appropriations related to the bill.

9:05 a.m. Chairman Longmuir closed the hearing.

Wyatt Armstrong, Committee Clerk

#### 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

#### **Political Subdivisions Committee**

Room JW327B, State Capitol

HB 1193 1/30/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and correctional officer appreciation grant program.

11:26 a.m. Chairman Longmuir opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Longmuir, Vice-Chairman Fegley, Vice-Chairman Jonas, Representatives Bolinske, Hager, Hatlestad, Heilman, Klemin, Motschenbacher, Ostlie, Toman, Warrey

Members Absent: Representative Davis

## **Discussion Topics:**

- North Dakota gifting clause
- Future appropriation needs

11:33 a.m. Representative Ostlie moved a Do Not Pass.

11:33 a.m. Representative Fegley seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Υ
Representative Clayton Fegley	Y
Representative Jim Jonas	N
Representative Macy Bolinske	Υ
Representative Jayme Davis	Α
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	Υ
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	Υ
Representative Matthew Heilman	Υ
Representative Lawrence R. Klemin	Υ
Representative Mike Motschenbacher	N
Representative Mitch Ostlie	Υ
Representative Nathan Toman	N
Representative Jonathan Warrey	Υ

11:35 a.m. Motion passed 9-3-1

11:36 a.m. Representative Ostlie will carry the bill.

11:44 a.m. Chairman Longmuir closed the hearing.

Wyatt Armstrong, Committee Clerk

# REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE HB 1193 (25.0501.01000)

Module ID: h\_stcomrep\_16\_007

**Carrier: Ostlie** 

**Political Subdivisions Committee (Rep. Longmuir, Chairman)** recommends **DO NOT PASS** (9 YEAS, 3 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1193 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

**2025 HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS** 

HB 1193

#### 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

### **Appropriations Committee**

Roughrider Room, State Capitol

HB 1193 2/10/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and correctional officer appreciation grant program.

3:08 p.m. Chairman Vigesaa called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Vigesaa, Vice Chairman Kempenich, Representatives Berg, Bosch, Brandenburg, Fisher, Hanson, Louser, Martinson, Meier, Monson, Murphy, Nathe, Nelson, O'Brien, Pyle, Richter, Sanford, Stemen, Swiontek, Wagner

Members Absent: Representatives Anderson, Mitskog

#### **Discussion Topics:**

- Grant Programs
- North Dakota Law Enforcement
- Retention Rates
- 3:08 p.m. Representative Longmuir introduced the Bill, testified in support and submitted testimony #36805.
- 3:30 p.m. Steve Vetter, North Dakota Senator, introduced proposed Amendment LC #25.0501.01002 and submitted testimony #36812.
- 3:51 p.m. Representative Nelson, North Dakota Legislature, introduced proposed Amendment LC #25.0501.01003 and submitted testimony #36820.
- 3:55 p.m. Donnell Preskey, North Dakota Association of Counties, answered questions.
- 3:57 p.m. Becky Keller, Finance Director for the Attorney General Office, answered questions.
- 4:03 p.m. Chairman Vigesaa closed the meeting.

Sierra Schartz, Committee Clerk

# 1193

1748 total officers that would qualify with having 4 years of service.

218 DOCR

412 Sheriffs office

848 All other peace officers including BCI, University police & City police

25.0501.01002 Title.

Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for Representative Vetter February 4, 2025

#### PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

#### **HOUSE BILL NO. 1193**

Introduced by

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Representatives Vetter, Bahl, Holle, Motschenbacher, Satrom, Christianson, McLeod, Schauer

Senators Barta, Cory, Meyer

- 1 A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and
- 2 correctional officer appreciation retention grant program.

#### 3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

- 4 SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION ATTORNEY GENERAL PEACE OFFICER AND
- 5 | CORRECTIONAL OFFICER APPRECIATION RETENTION GRANT PROGRAM ONE-TIME
- FUNDING. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury,

  not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$8,450,000\$10,448,000, or so much of the sum as may
- 8 be necessary, to the attorney general for the purpose of a peace officer and correctional officer
- 9 appreciation grant program, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending
- 10 June 30, 2027. The attorney general shall provide grants to:
- State agencies and political subdivisions on a reimbursement basis based on the
   number of peace officers licensed in good standing under chapter 12-63 and who
   have been employed by the same North Dakota state agency or political subdivision in
   a law enforcement capacity for at least four consecutive years.
  - The department of corrections and rehabilitation based on the number of correctional officers employed by the department of corrections and rehabilitation for at least four consecutive years.
- State agencies and political subdivisions receiving a grant under this program shall use the funds only for providing each eligible peace officer or correctional officer an appreciationa retention salary bonus of up to \$6,000\$3,000 at the end of each fiscal year. The attorney

### Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly

- 1 general shall establish an application process and eligibility requirements for the program in
- 2 consultation with the peace officer standards and training board and the department of
- 3 corrections and rehabilitation. The funding provided in this section is considered a one-time
- 4 funding item.

25.0501.01003 Title.

Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for Representative Nelson February 5, 2025

#### PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

### **HOUSE BILL NO. 1193**

#### Introduced by

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Representatives Vetter, Bahl, Holle, Motschenbacher, Satrom, Christianson, McLeod, Schauer

Senators Barta, Cory, Meyer

- 1 A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and
- 2 correctional officer appreciation grant program.

#### 3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

- 4 SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION ATTORNEY GENERAL PEACE OFFICER AND
  5 CORRECTIONAL OFFICER APPRECIATION GRANT PROGRAM ONE-TIME FUNDING.
  - There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$8,450,000\$3,500,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary,
- 8 to the attorney general for the purpose of a peace officer and correctional officer appreciation
- grant program, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The
- 10 attorney general shall provide grants to:
  - 1. State agencies and political subdivisions on a reimbursement basis based on the number of peace officers licensed in good standing under chapter 12-63 and who have been employed by the same North Dakota state agency or political subdivision in a law enforcement capacity for at least four consecutive years.
  - 2. The department of corrections and rehabilitation based on the number of correctional officers employed by the department of corrections and rehabilitation for at least four consecutive years.
  - State agencies and political subdivisions receiving a grant under this program shall use the funds only for providing each eligible peace officer or correctional officer an appreciation salary bonus of up to \$6,000 at the end of each fiscal year. The attorney general shall establish an

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application process and eligibility requirements for the program in consultation with the peace
officer standards and training board and the department of corrections and rehabilitation. The
attorney general shall provide grants to each city and county law enforcement agency in the
state based on the proportional number of licensed peace officers and correctional officers
employed by the city or county law enforcement agency compared to the total number of
licensed peace officers and correctional officers employed by all city and county law
enforcement agencies. Of the funding available for this program, a sum of at least \$750,000
must be granted to city and county law enforcement agencies employing ten or fewer
employees working in a law enforcement capacity. Funding appropriated in this section may be
used for providing hiring and retention bonuses to new and current law enforcement and
correctional officers and providing tuition and fee payments on behalf of law enforcement
trainees. The funding provided in this section is considered a one-time funding item.

#### 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

### **Appropriations Committee**

Roughrider Room, State Capitol

HB 1193 2/13/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and correctional officer appreciation grant program.

4:15 p.m. Chairman Vigesaa opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman Vigesaa, Vice-Chairman Kempenich, and Representatives Anderson, Berg, Bosch, Brandenburg, Fisher, Hanson, Louser, Martinson, Meier, Mitskog, Monson, Murphy, Nathe, Nelson, Pyle, Sanford, Stemen.

Members Absent: Representatives: Swiontek, Richter, O'Brien, Wagner

## **Discussion Topics:**

- Grant Programs
- North Dakota Law Enforcement
- Local Employees

4:17 p.m. Representative Nelson moved a Do Pass on Amendment #LC 25.0501.01003, #36820, from 2/10/25 meeting.

4:17 p.m. Representative Monson seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Don Vigesaa	Υ
Representative Keith Kempenich	Υ
Representative Bert Anderson	Υ
Representative Mike Berg	Υ
Representative Glen Bosch	Υ
Representative Mike Brandenburg	Υ
Representative Jay Fisher	Υ
Representative Karla Rose Hanson	Υ
Representative Scott Louser	Υ
Representative Bob Martinson	Υ
Representative Lisa Meier	Υ
Representative Alisa Mitskog	Υ
Representative David Monson	Υ
Representative Eric J. Murphy	Υ
Representative Mike Nathe	Υ
Representative Jon O. Nelson	Υ
Representative Emily O'Brien	AB
Representative Brandy L. Pyle	Υ
Representative David Richter	AB
Representative Mark Sanford	Υ

Representative Gregory Stemen	Υ
Representative Steve Swiontek	AB
Representative Scott Wagner	AB

4:23 p.m. Motion Passed 19-0-4.

4:24 p.m. Representative Hanson moved to further Amend to change the word May to Must page 2 line 9.

4:25 p.m. Representative Nathe seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Don Vigesaa	Y
Representative Keith Kempenich	Ϋ́
Representative Bert Anderson	Ϋ́
Representative Mike Berg	Ϋ́
Representative Glen Bosch	Ý
Representative Mike Brandenburg	Ϋ́
Representative Jay Fisher	Ϋ́
Representative Karla Rose Hanson	Ϋ́
Representative Scott Louser	Ϋ́
Representative Bob Martinson	Ϋ́
Representative Lisa Meier	Ϋ́
Representative Alisa Mitskog	Ý
Representative David Monson	Ϋ́
Representative Eric J. Murphy	Ϋ́
Representative Mike Nathe	Ϋ́
Representative Jon O. Nelson	Ϋ́
Representative Emily O'Brien	AB
Representative Brandy L. Pyle	Y
Representative David Richter	AB
Representative Mark Sanford	Y
Representative Gregory Stemen	Ϋ́
Representative Steve Swiontek	AB
Representative Scott Wagner	AB

4:26 p.m. Motion Passed 19-0-4.

4:27 p.m. Representative Nelson motioned Do Pass as Amended.

4:27 p.m. Representative Monson seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Don Vigesaa	Υ
Representative Keith Kempenich	Υ
Representative Bert Anderson	Υ
Representative Mike Berg	Υ

Representative Glen Bosch	V
•	I V
Representative Mike Brandenburg	Y
Representative Jay Fisher	Y
Representative Karla Rose Hanson	Υ
Representative Scott Louser	Υ
Representative Bob Martinson	Υ
Representative Lisa Meier	Υ
Representative Alisa Mitskog	Υ
Representative David Monson	Υ
Representative Eric J. Murphy	Υ
Representative Mike Nathe	Υ
Representative Jon O. Nelson	Υ
Representative Emily O'Brien	AB
Representative Brandy L. Pyle	Υ
Representative David Richter	AB
Representative Mark Sanford	Υ
Representative Gregory Stemen	Υ
Representative Steve Swiontek	AB
Representative Scott Wagner	AB

- 4:27 p.m. Motion passed 19-0-4.
- 4:27 p.m. Representative Nelson will carry the bill.
- 4:31 p.m. Chairman Vigesaa adjourned the meeting.

Madaline Cooper Committee Clerk for Sierra Schartz, Committee Clerk

25.0501.01004 Title.02000 Fiscal No. 1

Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota

Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for House Appropriations Committee

# PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

February 13, 2025 2, 14, 25

#### **HOUSE BILL NO. 1193**

Introduced by

Representatives Vetter, Bahl, Holle, Motschenbacher, Satrom, Christianson, McLeod, Schauer

Senators Barta, Cory, Meyer

- A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and 1
- 2 correctional officer appreciation grant program; and to provide for a legislative management
- 3 report.

#### BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA: 4

#### 5 SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION - ATTORNEY GENERAL - PEACE OFFICER AND 6 CORRECTIONAL OFFICER APPRECIATION GRANT PROGRAM - LEGISLATIVE 7 MANAGEMENT REPORT - ONE-TIME FUNDING. There is appropriated out of any moneys in 8 the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of 9 \$8,450,000\$3,500,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the attorney general for 10 the purpose of a peace officer and correctional officer appreciation grant program, for the 11 biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The attorney general shall provide 12 grants to: State agencies and political subdivisions on a reimbursement basis based on the 13 number of peace officers licensed in good standing under chapter 12-63 and who 14 have been employed by the same North Dakota state agency or political subdivision in 15 16 a law enforcement capacity for at least four consecutive years. 2. The department of corrections and rehabilitation based on the number of correctional 17 18 officers employed by the department of corrections and rehabilitation for at least four 19 consecutive years.

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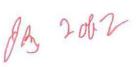
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State agencies and political subdivisions receiving a grant under this program shall use the funds only for providing each eligible peace officer or correctional officer an appreciation salary bonus of up to \$6,000 at the end of each fiscal year. The attorney general shall establish an application process and eligibility requirements for the program in consultation with the peace officer standards and training board and the department of corrections and rehabilitation. The attorney general shall provide grants to each city and county law enforcement agency in the state based on the proportional number of licensed peace officers and correctional officers employed by the city or county law enforcement agency compared to the total number of licensed peace officers and correctional officers employed by all city and county law enforcement agencies. Of the funding available for this program, a sum of at least \$750,000 must be granted to city and county law enforcement agencies employing ten or fewer employees working in a law enforcement capacity. Funding appropriated in this section must be used for providing hiring and retention bonuses to new and current law enforcement and correctional officers and providing tuition and fee payments on behalf of law enforcement trainees. During the 2025-26 interim, the attorney general shall provide a report to the legislative management regarding the use and effectiveness of grant funds, the number of grants provided, the average amount of bonuses provided by city and county law enforcement agencies and correctional facilities, and other program outcomes under this section. The funding provided in this section is considered a one-time funding item.

Module ID: h\_stcomrep\_26\_062 Carrier: Nelson Insert LC: 25.0501.01004 Title: 02000

#### REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE HB 1193

**Appropriations Committee (Rep. Vigesaa, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS** (25.0501.01004) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (19 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 4 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1193 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

2025 SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
HB 1193

#### 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

### **Workforce Development Committee**

Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

HB 1193 3/21/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and correctional officer appreciation grant program; and to provide for a legislative management report.

10:57 a.m. Chairman Wobbema called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Wobbema, Vice-Chairman Axtman, Senator Boschee, Senator Larson, Senator Powers.

#### **Discussion Topics:**

- Officer Retention Bonuses
- Competition for Available Workforce
- Local Funding Sources
- Duty-Related Fatalities

10:58 a.m. Representative Steve Vetter introduced the bill and submitted testimony #43448 and #43449.

- 11:24 a.m. Representative Jon Nelson testified in favor.
- 11:39 a.m. Donnell Preskey, Government/Public Relations Specialist with ND Association of Counties, testified in favor and submitted testimony #43444.
- 11:48 a.m. Calvin Benson, ND Peace Officer Association, testified in favor.
- 11:49 a.m. Stephanie Dassinger Engebretson, appearing on behalf of Chiefs of Police Association of ND, testified in favor.
- 11:50 a.m. Becky Keller, Finance Director for the Office of Attorney General, testified in favor.
- 11:56 a.m. Chairman Wobbema closed the hearing.

Andrew Ficek, Committee Clerk

### Comments from ND Sheriffs on Back the Blue Grants

#### Increased Deputy morale

The recruitment bonus helped us hire a couple correctional officer. The bonus caught there eye and applied. The staff that got the retention bonus felt valued and wanted to stay. This was a great program for the smaller agencies that could not give out the big yearly pay.

The Billings County Sheriff's Office utilized this grant for retention bonuses of current officers. The grant was distributed equally amongst the officers to show appreciation for the work they've done and continue to do. It was well received and appreciated by the officers. We retained all of our officers, so it appears to be working.

It helped bridge some of the income gaps that Golden Valley County just cannot afford. For example, one of my deputies used the money to work on the exterior of his house, and two of the deputies used the money to purchase new duty weapons. Initially, I was concerned about other County Offices seeing that the Sheriff Office had received a bonus, and being jealous. It seems that beings the funds came from the State, and not the County Commissioners, the other county employees did not seem to care.

Although i feel the funds would better be better spent on retirement programs for law enforcement, such as increased multipliers, or health care for retired officers from 55 to medicare, this program is also beneficial as well. It seems especially beneficial for smaller jurisdictions and for corrections. Corrections officers are extremely under paid in the state of north dakota and this program should focus primarily on those positions and those law enforcement officials employed in the smaller jurisdictions.

Everyone appreciates a monetary bonus, whether for retention or as an incentive for applying for public service. These grant funds add a needed level of assistance to our county in an attempt to maintain our current staff and help in attempting to gain new hires, that would not be available to us otherwise.

It was an appreciated Thank you from the State. During the grant period it helped to retain the staff and they were given equal payments over the two year period. One new Deputy was hired. He was given a payment after completing his FTO and 6 month probation. The remaining funds were given to everyone at the end of 2024.

The funds were used to retain; however, both deputies left for other law enforcement positions

With our limited budget, it was able to help bridge the gap in our pay to others pay to help retain staff that may have otherwise been looking to go elsewhere for higher pay.

It helped to show our officers that they are valued.

Our County falls under the Garcia Ruling to where we are unable to provide overtime pay so the retention bonus helped with the extra work the Deputies provide.

It was very important in retaining the staff we have.

The grant allowed us to recruit one deputy and train him, give a sign on bonus to another deputy and the rest was split between all the other deputies.

It helped us compete with agencies that already have a sign on bonus because we are a smaller agency and don't have the funding to do so on a regular basis. It also helped with retention of our more seasoned & trained staff to keep them in our community and showing them, they are appreciated.

The back the blue grant was beneficial to us as an agency as it has helped us to retain a lot of the staff that we have with between 1-4 years of experience, which I believe can also be accredited to the leadership team that we

have established, and the relationships that we have formed with our staff. As for recruiting I believe that it was beneficial in way of us being able to offer something to new hires to show our appreciation for the jobs that they do. Some other numbers that I feel may be beneficial, our facility has not lost an employee with over 4 years experience since 2022, mostly in part we just don't have employees with that longevity as of yet. We have a total of 12 employees with less than one year of experience, 9 employees with between 1-2 years of experience, 4 employees with between 2-3 years of experience and 1 employee with over 8 years experience. Of course these numbers are only based on this time of employment, when I feel that we would potentially get a better look at the actual number if we factored in previous employment or total length of employment within corrections. Of our 53% turnover in 2024, four of the employees that left us are back and still employed with us today, partly thanks to the back the blue grant in my opinion. We have 12 employees that have been with us prior to 2024, and 10 employees that were hired during 2024 that we have managed to keep employed with us thanks to the back the blue grant. In addition, 4 of 4 employees that we have hired in 2025 are still with us, we have not lost anyone that we have hired yet this year, which I feel is in part due to the culture that the back the blue grant was able to help us create in our facility. I hope that these numbers have been helpful.

It assisted our agency in retaining some of our correctional officers who were looking for other employment. We were able to increase their pay with adjustments approved by the County Commission and provide them with a retention bonus.

it was not. no one left. The money would be better spent in 1/2 % increase in Pers retirement funding

This grant was used as retention bonuses and was greatly appreciated by the staff. It is hard to keep a full staff in a small rural agency.

I'm not sure there is a clear way to quantify the usefulness of the retention bonus staff received. To my knowledge there hasn't been any indications the bonus resulted in someone choosing to stay with our office that otherwise would have left.

We used it as a retention bonus and all recipients were much appreciative and this kept one officer from seeking other employment.

I don't know if it made any difference when people decided to leave. What we did learn is that our employees recruit the best candidates and we are looking at implementing recruitment bonuses for staff that recruits successful candidates.

It was greatly appreciated, but I feel the money could be used to make law enforcement more attractive for long term retention beyond 4 years such as increasing the multiplier for retirement. For the small Counties the Bonus helps but it still doesn't compete with the high salaries of the bigger jurisdictions.

The deputies really appreciated it and helped in retention

Our county utilized it to retain employees through the biennium. We are disbursing based off retention after notification of the funds being received. Our office is currently fully staffed and has been for the longest period in the last 8 years. I think it assisted with retention but if it was a larger sum it would hold more weight. I also think it would be a significant improvement if the legislature set the amount per officer and required eligible officers to complete a form and have it signed off by their department head in order to receive the funds. I think agencies utilized the previous funds in ways that were not intended by the state.



# North Dakota House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL 600 EAST BOULEVARD BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Representative Steve Vetter

District 18 804 South 17th Street Grand Forks, ND 58201-4241 smvetter@ndlegis.gov **COMMITTEES:** 

Judiciary (Vice Chair) Government and Veterans Affairs

Chairman Wobbema and Senators of the Workforce Development Committee, I really appreciate your time to take a look at this bill as I know you are very busy after crossover.

My name is Steve Vetter, I represent district 18, eastern part of Grand Forks along the Red River. It has a little rural area going as far north as Manvel, ND.

HB 1193 as introduced was a Police Retention bill that focused on community policing. It passed the House Floor after a Do Not Pass recommendation. In House Appropriations, they cut the fiscal note by a third to 3.5 million and took out the policy out of the bill and replaced it with the same program from last session. It is 3.5 million appreciation grant for city and counties police. It gives more to the smaller counties than the city counties. Last time it was given to department to spend how they wished. This time it has some language that it can only be used for retention or hiring. So, this 3.5 million is given out to every officer. Because of the large number of officers that get the payment, the bonus amount is very limited compared my original bill. It is the exact same "back the blue" plan from last session. If we are already going to spend this money, let's spend it more efficiently.

If you haven't guessed by now, I'm not a fan of my bill as it is currently written. I hope you will understand this after you look at my proposed amendment. My proposed amendment keeps the fiscal note the same but puts back the community policing retention policy from the original bill. The retention policy is somewhat simple but very effective. It gives a retention bonus to all officers that have been at their same agency for 4 years. This policy keeps the experienced cops in the same job. Our good and experienced police know their neighborhoods and who the bad guys are. By giving incentive to the experienced police to stay in their same agency, it keeps our communities safe. This policy is about public safety. In addition this policy helps with poaching from one agency to the other. The original bill was for all officers throughout the state. However, because of the reduced fiscal note of 3.5 million, this needs to be put into a pilot program. This is what the proposed amendment does. It creates a pilot program for county police and city police with less than 10 officers. This allows for a

\$4,000 retention annual bonus for 2 years. This group was picked as it is the most in need of retention and to fit within the 3.5 million fiscal note.

Additional Option: If you added all the city police(4 years in agency) to the pilot program, it would increase the fiscal note to 7.15 million. If you reduced the bonus to \$3,000 then the fiscal note would be 5.3 million.

#1 Obligation is safety- the original bill provides safety by keeping the best and most experienced police to stay in their same neighborhoods. These Cops know their neighborhoods, they know who the bad guys are and they know how to protect us.

Jails/prisons

It's not our job: yes it is because we caused the problem. Clearing of crimes:

Safety by community policing = prevention of crime.

What is the Price tag on safety? Actually we will save money

Retention - there was testimony claiming this will retain his deputies.

Poaching

Reward versus punishment: Reward the good guys versus punishing the bad guys.

They will all know about it.....Advertising

We need to promote community policing to keep our communities safe. We need to pass this Neighborhood retention tool. The original bill does this but the current one does not. If we are going to spend this money on Backing the Blue, let's spend it efficiently and effectively. The bill only does the retention policies I just talked about with the amendment. Please add the amendment

25.0501.02007 Title.

Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for Representative Vetter March 10, 2025

# PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO FIRST ENGROSSMENT

#### **ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1193**

Introduced by

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Representatives Vetter, Bahl, Holle, Motschenbacher, Satrom, Christianson, McLeod, Schauer

Senators Barta, Cory, Meyer

- A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and correctional officer appreciation grant pilot program; and to provide for a legislative management report.
- 4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION - ATTORNEY GENERAL - PEACE OFFICER AND CORRECTIONAL OFFICER APPRECIATION RETENTION GRANT PILOT PROGRAM -LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT REPORT - ONE-TIME FUNDING. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$3,500,000\$3,600,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the attorney general for the purpose of a peace officer and correctional officer appreciation retention grant pilot program, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The attorney general shall provide grants to each city and county law enforcement agency in the state based on the proportional number of licensed peace officers and correctional officers employed by the city or county law enforcement agency compared to the total number of licensed peace officers and correctional officers employed by all city and county law enforcement agencies. Of the fundingavailable for this program, a sum of at least \$750,000 must be granted to city and county lawenforcement agencies employing ten or fewer employees working in a law enforcementcapacity. Funding appropriated in this section must be used for providing hiring and retention bonuses to new and current law enforcement and correctional officers and providing tuition and fee payments on behalf of law enforcement trainees. During the 2025-26 interim, the attorney

general shall provide a report to the legislative management regarding the use and effectiveness of grant funds, the number of grants provided, the average amount of bonuses-provided by city and county law enforcement agencies and correctional facilities, and other-program outcomes under this section:

- 1. Counties on a reimbursement basis based on the number of sheriffs that qualify as a peace officer, are licensed in good standing under chapter 12-63, and who have been employed by the same county in a law enforcement capacity for at least four consecutive years.
- 2. City police departments on a reimbursement basis based on the number of employees that qualify as a peace officer, are licensed in good standing under chapter 12-63, and who have been employed by the same police department in a law enforcement capacity for at least four consecutive years. To be eligible for a grant under this subsection, a police department must employ fewer than ten peace officers.

Any county or city policy department receiving a grant under this program shall use the funds only for providing each eligible peace officer a retention salary bonus of up to \$4,000 at the end of each fiscal year. The attorney general shall establish an application process and eligibility requirements for the program in consultation with the peace officer standards and training board. The funding provided in this section is considered a one-time funding item.

# 1193

1748 total officers that would qualify with having 4 years of service.

1530 total without DOCR

218 DOCR

412 Sheriffs office

482 City Police

848 All other peace officers including BCI, University police & City police

Pilot Program Sheriffs & SmallTown x 4,000/year = 3.6 million

All officers  $1748 \times \$1,000 = 3.5 \text{ million}$ 

1748 x \$3000 = \$10.5 million

#### 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

### **Workforce Development Committee**

Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

HB 1193 3/27/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and correctional officer appreciation grant program; and to provide for a legislative management report.

10:04 a.m. Chairman Wobbema called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Wobbema, Vice-Chairman Axtman, Senator Boschee, Senator Larson, Senator Powers.

#### **Discussion Topics:**

- Departments with 100 or Fewer Officers
- Correctional Facility Staffing Levels

10:04 a.m. Chairman Wobbema opened discussion on Back the Blue Bill of 2023.

10:15 a.m. Senator Larson moved Do Pass and Rerefer to Appropriations.

10:15 a.m. Senator Axtman seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Mike Wobbema	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	Y
Senator Josh Boschee	Y
Senator Diane Larson	Y
Senator Michelle Powers	Y

Motion passed 5-0-0.

Senator Wobbema will carry the bill.

10:16 Chairman Wobbema closed the hearing.

Andrew Ficek, Committee Clerk

# REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE ENGROSSED HB 1193 (25.0501.02000)

Module ID: s\_stcomrep\_49\_006

**Carrier: Wobbema** 

Workforce Development Committee (Sen. Wobbema, Chairman) recommends DO PASS and BE REREFERRED to the Appropriations Committee (5 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1193 was rereferred to the Appropriations Committee. This bill affects workforce development.

**2025 SENATE APPROPRIATIONS** 

HB 1193

#### 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

### Appropriations - Education and Environment Division Sakakawea Room, State Capitol

HB 1193 4/1/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and correctional officer appreciation grant program; and to provide for a legislative management report.

2:52 p.m. Chairman Sorvaag called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Ronald Sorvaag, Senator Cole Conley, Senator Donald Schaible, Senator Paul J. Thomas, Senator Scott Meyer.

### **Discussion Topics:**

- Nature of One-Time Funding.
- Support for Law Enforcement.
- Change Funding Source to SIIF.

2:52 p.m. Representative Vetter, District 18, introduced the bill in favor and answered committee questions.

3:06 p.m. Chairman Sorvaag adjourned the meeting.

Steven Hall, Committee Clerk

#### 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

# Appropriations - Education and Environment Division Sakakawea Room, State Capitol

HB 1193 4/9/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and correctional officer appreciation grant program; and to provide for a legislative management report.

3:26 p.m. Chairman Sorvaag called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Ronald Sorvaag, Senator Cole Conley, Senator Donald Schaible, Senator Paul J. Thomas, Senator Scott Meyer.

#### **Discussion Topics:**

- Law Enforcement Bonus.
- From General to SIIF Funds.
- 3:27 p.m. Senator Thomas testified in favor.
- 3:30 p.m. Senator Conley testified in favor.
- 3:33 p.m. Senator Meyer moved amendment LC# 25.0501.02008 to change language, to change general funding to SIIF and submitted testimony #44955.
- 3:34 p.m. Senator Thomas seconded the motion.

Voice-Vote: Motion Passed.

- 3:35 p.m. Senator Meyer moved a Do Pass as amended.
- 3:35 p.m. Senator Conley seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Ronald Sorvaag	Υ
Senator Cole Conley	Υ
Senator Scott Meyer	Υ
Senator Donald Schaible	N
Senator Paul J. Thomas	Υ

Motion Passed: 4-1-0.

Senator Meyer will carry the bill.

3:36 p.m. Chairman Sorvaag closed the meeting.

Steven Hall, Committee Clerk

25.0501.02008 Title. Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for Senate Appropriations - Education and Environment Division Committee

April 9, 2025

Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota

# PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO FIRST ENGROSSMENT

#### **ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1193**

Introduced by

Representatives Vetter, Bahl, Holle, Motschenbacher, Satrom, Christianson, McLeod, Schauer

Senators Barta, Cory, Meyer

- 1 A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and
- 2 correctional officer appreciation grant program; and to provide for a legislative management
- 3 report.

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#### 4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

5 SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION - ATTORNEY GENERAL - STRATEGIC INVESTMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS FUND - PEACE OFFICER AND CORRECTIONAL OFFICER 6 7 APPRECIATION GRANT PROGRAM - LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT REPORT - ONE-TIME 8 FUNDING. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general strategic investment and improvements fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$3,500,000, or 9 so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the attorney general for the purpose of a peace 10 11 officer and correctional officer appreciation grant program, for the biennium beginning July 1, 12 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The attorney general shall provide grants to each city and county law enforcement agency in the state based on the proportional number of licensed 13 14 peace officers and correctional officers employed by the city or county law enforcement agency 15 compared to the total number of licensed peace officers and correctional officers employed by all city and county law enforcement agencies. Of the funding available for this program, a sum 16 of at least \$750,000 must be granted to city and county law enforcement agencies employing 17 18 ten or fewer employees working in a law enforcement capacity. Funding appropriated in this

section must be used for providing hiring and retention bonuses to new and current law

#### Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly

- 1 enforcement and correctional officers and providing tuition and fee payments on behalf of law
- 2 enforcement trainees. During the 2025-26 interim, the attorney general shall provide a report to
- 3 the legislative management regarding the use and effectiveness of grant funds, the number of
- 4 grants provided, the average amount of bonuses provided by city and county law enforcement
- 5 agencies and correctional facilities, and other program outcomes under this section. The
- 6 funding provided in this section is considered a one-time funding item.

#### 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

# **Appropriations Committee**

Harvest Room, State Capitol

HB 1193 4/11/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and correctional officer appreciation grant program; and to provide for a legislative management report.

8:25 a.m. Chairman Bekkedahl opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Bekkedahl, Vice-Chairman Erbele, and Senators Burckhard, Cleary, Conley, Davison, Dever, Dwyer, Magrum, Mathern, Meyer, Schaible, Sickler, Sorvaag, Thomas, Wanzek.

## **Discussion Topics:**

- Ongoing Appropriation
- Employee Classification and Need for Bonuses
- · Community Health Trust Fund

8:25 a.m. Senator Meyer introduced the bill and submitted testimony #44928.

8:26 a.m. Senator Meyer moved amendment LC 25.0501.02008.

8:26 a.m. Senator Thomas seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Brad Bekkedahl	Υ
Senator Robert Erbele	Υ
Senator Randy A. Burckhard	Υ
Senator Sean Cleary	Υ
Senator Cole Conley	Υ
Senator Kyle Davison	Υ
Senator Dick Dever	Υ
Senator Michael Dwyer	Υ
Senator Jeffery J. Magrum	Υ
Senator Tim Mathern	Υ
Senator Scott Meyer	Υ
Senator Donald Schaible	Υ
Senator Jonathan Sickler	Υ
Senator Ronald Sorvaag	Υ
Senator Paul J. Thomas	Υ
Senator Terry M. Wanzek	Υ

Motion Passed 16-0-0.

8:33 a.m. Senator Meyer moved a Do Pass as Amended.

8:33 a.m. Senator Sorvaag seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Brad Bekkedahl	Υ
Senator Robert Erbele	Υ
Senator Randy A. Burckhard	Υ
Senator Sean Cleary	Υ
Senator Cole Conley	Υ
Senator Kyle Davison	Υ
Senator Dick Dever	Υ
Senator Michael Dwyer	N
Senator Jeffery J. Magrum	Υ
Senator Tim Mathern	N
Senator Scott Meyer	Υ
Senator Donald Schaible	N
Senator Jonathan Sickler	N
Senator Ronald Sorvaag	Υ
Senator Paul J. Thomas	Υ
Senator Terry M. Wanzek	Υ

Motion Passed 12-4-0.

Senator Meyer will carry the bill.

8:34 a.m. Chairman Bekkedahl closed the hearing.

Elizabeth Reiten, Committee Clerk

25.0501.02008 Title.03000 Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for Senate Appropriations - Education and Environment Division Committee

April 9, 2025

Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO FIRST ENGROSSMENT

(0 Y/11/25 10fz

#### **ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1193**

Introduced by

Representatives Vetter, Bahl, Holle, Motschenbacher, Satrom, Christianson, McLeod, Schauer

Senators Barta, Cory, Meyer

- 1 A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a peace officer and
- 2 correctional officer appreciation grant program; and to provide for a legislative management
- 3 report.

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4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

AND IMPROVEMENTS FUND - PEACE OFFICER AND CORRECTIONAL OFFICER
APPRECIATION GRANT PROGRAM - LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT REPORT - ONE-TIME
FUNDING. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general strategic investment and improvements fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$3,500,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the attorney general for the purpose of a peace officer and correctional officer appreciation grant program, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The attorney general shall provide grants to each city and county law enforcement agency in the state based on the proportional number of licensed peace officers and correctional officers employed by the city or county law enforcement agency compared to the total number of licensed peace officers and correctional officers employed by all city and county law enforcement agencies. Of the funding available for this program, a sum of at least \$750,000 must be granted to city and county law enforcement agencies employing ten or fewer employees working in a law enforcement capacity. Funding appropriated in this section must be used for providing hiring and retention bonuses to new and current law

### Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly

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- 1 enforcement and correctional officers and providing tuition and fee payments on behalf of law
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- 4 grants provided, the average amount of bonuses provided by city and county law enforcement
- 5 agencies and correctional facilities, and other program outcomes under this section. The
- 6 funding provided in this section is appropriation in this section is considered a one-time funding
- 7 item.

Module ID: s\_stcomrep\_60\_003 Carrier: Meyer Insert LC: 25.0501.02008 Title: 03000

#### REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE ENGROSSED HB 1193

**Appropriations Committee (Sen. Bekkedahl, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS** (25.0501.02008) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (12 YEAS, 4 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed HB 1193 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

25.0501.02008 Title. Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for Senate Appropriations - Education and Environment Division Committee

April 9, 2025

Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota

# PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO FIRST ENGROSSMENT

#### **ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1193**

Introduced by

Representatives Vetter, Bahl, Holle, Motschenbacher, Satrom, Christianson, McLeod, Schauer

Senators Barta, Cory, Meyer

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#### Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly

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