

2025 HOUSE JUDICIARY

HB 1347

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Judiciary Committee
Room JW327B, State Capitol

HB 1347
1/28/2025

A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 27-05 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to district court supervised treatment programs approved by the supreme court.

10:30 a.m. Chairman Klemin opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Klemin, Vice-Chairman Karls, Vice-Chairman Vetter, Representatives Christianson, Henderson, Hoverson, Johnston, McLeod, Olson, Satrom, Tveit, VanWinkle, Wolff, Schneider

Discussion Topics:

- Courts impacted by proposed bill
- Previous issues within the DOCR and Human Services
- Budget allocation for treatment programs

10:30 a.m. Representative Bernie Satrom, North Dakota Representative for District 12, introduced the bill.

10:34 a.m. Jessica Throlson, Manager of Specialized Dockets for the North Dakota Court System, testified in favor and provided testimony #31888 and #31889.

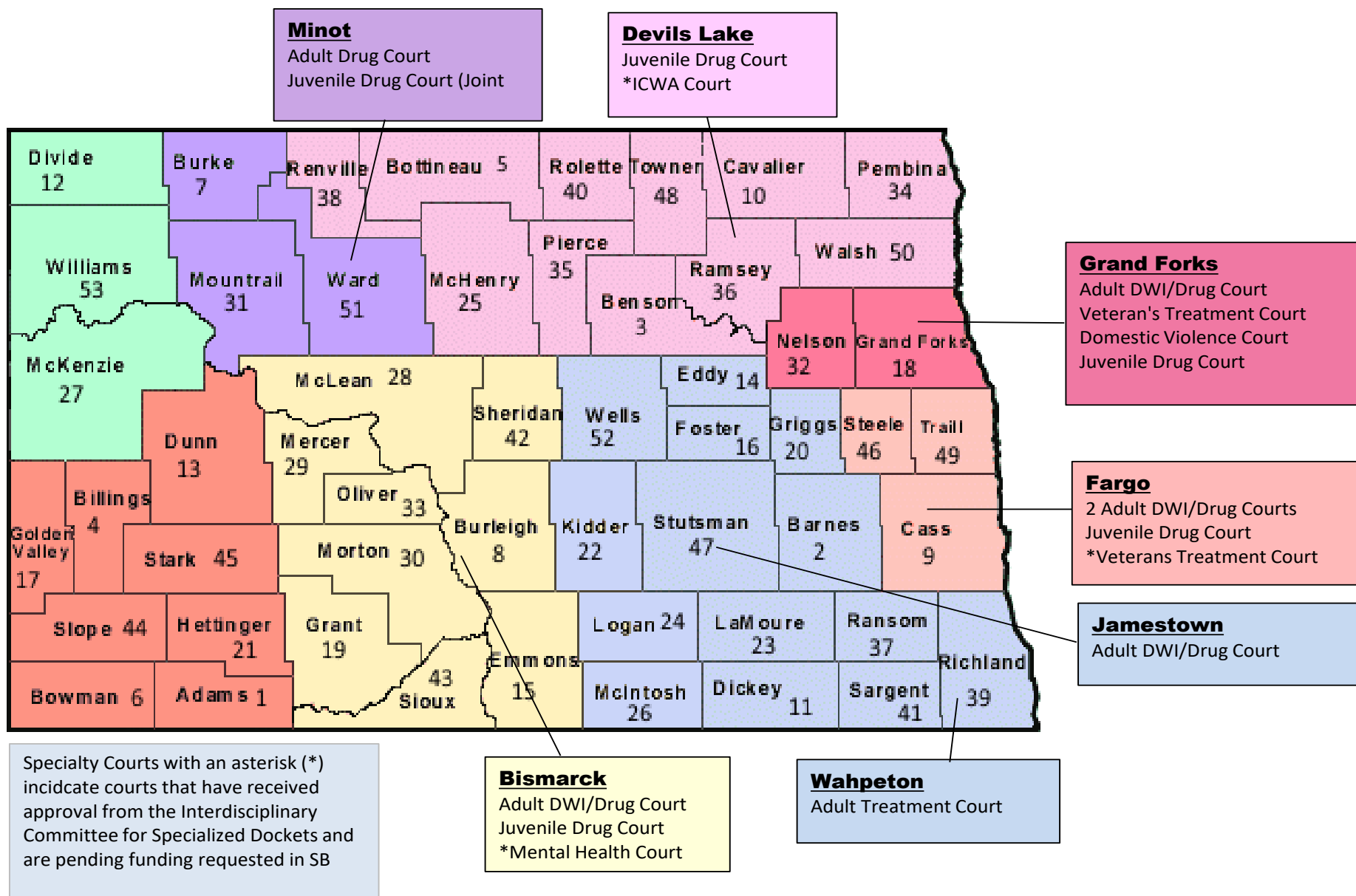
10:41 a.m. Thomas Erhardt, Chief Parole and Probation Officer of North Dakota Parole, Probation and Pretrial Services, testified in favor and provided testimony #31903.

10:49 a.m. Pamela Sagness, Executive Director of the Behavioral Health Division for the Department of Health and Human Services, testified in favor and provided testimony #32037.

10:54 a.m. Chairman Klemin closed the hearing.

Wyatt Armstrong, Committee Clerk

North Dakota Specialized Dockets



HB 1347
House Judiciary
January 28, 2025
Testimony of Jessica Throlson

Chair Klemin and members of the Judiciary Committee, for the record, my name is Jessica Throlson. I am the specialized dockets manager for the ND Court System.

In this testimony, I will be using the term “treatment courts” instead of “drug courts” to reflect the house passing HB 1030, which changes the name of drug courts to treatment courts. HB 1347 is before you today to provide a basic construct for the roles and responsibilities associated with Treatment Courts in the state of North Dakota. We currently have 14 adult and juvenile specialized dockets operating in North Dakota and have done so for approximately 25 years.

Throughout their existence, we have worked to create treatment courts/specialized dockets through a largely unstructured approach. We currently have 6 adult treatment courts that are supervised by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR), 6 juvenile courts, 1 adult treatment court in Richland County and 1 veterans treatment court in Grand Forks supervised by the court system. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has worked with us to coordinate and implement treatment required for these courts.

As these treatment courts/specialized dockets are a part of the court system, an internal structure was deemed to be necessary to “vet” the creation of treatment courts/specialized dockets. In 2019, the supreme court through its rule making authority created the Interdisciplinary Committee on Specialized Dockets through [Administrative Rule 60](#). This committee reviews requests to create specialized dockets and makes recommendations on the creation of them to the supreme court. This process works well for an internal structure to review and provide structure as well as guidance for treatment courts. However, we have no equivalent to guide all stakeholders in this process. Therefore, representatives from DOCR, DHHS and the Court System met over the last year to attempt to provide more a more thorough collaboration/coordination between the justice system stakeholders.

It is through this collaboration and coordination that HB 1347 came into being. I urge a do pass and am available for questions.

**HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
REPRESENTATIVE LAWRENCE KLEMIN, CHAIR
JANUARY 28, 2025**

**TOM ERHARDT, CHIEF PAROLE AND PROBATION OFFICER
PRESENTING TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1347**

Chairman Klemin and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Tom Erhardt, and I am the Chief Parole and Probation Officer of North Dakota Parole, Probation and Pretrial Services, a division of the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The Parole, Probation and Pretrial Services Division is responsible for delivering correctional supervision to over seven thousand adults released from prison by the authority of the North Dakota Parole Board, sentenced to supervised by probation or ordered to pretrial supervision by district courts, and transferred to North Dakota via the Interstate Compact for Adult Offender Supervision. Our staff of approximately one hundred fifty work out of seventeen district offices throughout the state. I stand before you today to provide testimony in support of House Bill 1347.

House Bill 1030 has been passed by the House and is being reviewed by the Senate and changes “drug courts” to “treatment courts” in statute. For purposes of this testimony, I will refer to all as “treatment courts”. The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) Parole, Probation, and Pretrial Services Division supports eight treatment courts in North Dakota. Veteran’s Treatment Court in Grand Forks, treatment court in Bismarck, Jamestown, two in Fargo, Grand Forks, Wahpeton, and Minot. The division

provides supervision and case management for participants in each of these treatment courts by assigning probation officers and drug court coordinators to the team to fulfill this role. DOCR provides a program manager who supervises staff, manages the program, coordinates treatment services in some areas, and coordinates of program evaluation. House bill 1347 clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the agencies involved with treatment courts throughout North Dakota. Throughout the past year leaders from the DOCR, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Office of the State Court Administrator have met to discuss this issue and have all agreed that clarifying roles in statute would ensure that each entity would perform its duties within the scope of the statute, mission, and policies of each agency.

Adult treatment courts in North Dakota have proven effective. A 2022 outcome evaluation of adult DWI/drug court programs by North Dakota State University showed that participating in a drug court in North Dakota reduces one-year and two-year recidivism rates by 10% on average, and up to 20% for the highest performing program. These programs are an essential, cost-effective alternative to incarceration that works for those defendants who successfully complete them.

Please consider a “do pass” on House Bill 1347. I will stand to answer any questions I can. Thank you.



Testimony
House Bill No. 1347
House Judiciary
Representative Klemin Chairman

Chairman Klemin, and members of the House Judiciary Committee, I am Pamela Sagness with the Department of Health and Human Services (Department), Behavioral Health Division. I am here in support of House Bill No. 1347.

Over the past year, the Department has partnered with court administration and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to better support treatment courts in North Dakota. House Bill No. 1347 would clarify the roles and responsibilities of the agencies involved with treatment courts throughout North Dakota. Clarifying roles in statute would ensure that the Department can best perform our duty within the scope of the statute, mission, and policies of our agency.

The proposed language regarding the Department allows for oversight and flexibility in establishing behavioral health services in each region based on the court's needs and with consideration of regional differences. Currently, the treatment providers in each of these courts vary. For example, in some regions the services are provided by the public behavioral health clinic and in other regions it is provided by a private provider contracted with the state. Flexibility is necessary to ensure regional differences and resources are considered and treatment programs are adequate, available, and adhere to best practice standards.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to try to answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you.

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Judiciary Committee
Room JW327B, State Capitol

HB 1347
1/28/2025

A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 27-05 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to district court supervised treatment programs approved by the supreme court.

4:14 p.m. Chairman Klemin opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Klemin, Vice-Chairman Karls, Vice-Chairman Vetter, Representatives Christianson, Henderson, Hoverson, Johnston, McLeod, Olson, Satrom, Tveit, VanWinkle, Wolff, Schneider

Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action

4:14 p.m. Representative McLeod moved a Do Pass.

4:14 p.m. Representative Vetter 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	Y

4:16 p.m. Motion passed 14-0-0

4:16 p.m. Representative Tveit will carry the bill.

4:17 p.m. Chairman Klemin closed the hearing.

Wyatt Armstrong, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1347 ([25.0871.01000](#))

Judiciary Committee (Rep. Klemin, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (14 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1347 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2025 SENATE JUDICIARY

HB 1347

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Judiciary Committee Peace Garden Room, State Capitol

HB 1347
3/18/2025

A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 27-05 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to district court supervised treatment programs approved by the supreme court.

10:01 a.m. Chair Larson opened the hearing.

Members present:

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

Discussion Topics:

- Roles and responsibilities of treatment courts
- Coordination of treatment services
- Process for establishing new treatment courts

10:01 a.m. Representative Satrom introduced the bill.

10:03 a.m. Jessica Throlson, Manager of Specialized Dockets, Supreme Court, testified in favor and submitted testimony #42517.

10:06 a.m. Pamela Sagness, Executive Director, Behavior Health & Human Services, testified in favor and submitted testimony #41861.

10:09 a.m. Thomas Erhardt, Chief Parole and Probation Officer, ND DOCR, testified in favor and submitted testimony #42557.

10:15 a.m. Chair Larson closed the hearing.

10:15 a.m. Senator Braunberger moved a Do Pass.

10:15 a.m. Senator Luick 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	A

Motion Passed 6-0-1.

Senate Judiciary Committee

HB 1347

3/18/2025

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10:15 a.m. Senator Braunberger will carry the bill.

10:16 a.m. Chair Larson closed the hearing.

Kendra McCann, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1347 ([25.0871.01000](#))

Judiciary Committee (Sen. Larson, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1347 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

**Testimony
House Bill 1347
Senate Judiciary
Senator Larson, Chairman**

Chairman Larson, and members of the Judiciary Committee, I am Pamela Sagness, Behavioral Health Executive Director with the Department of Health and Human Services. I am here in support of House Bill 1347.

Over the past year, the Department of Health and Human Services has partnered with the Courts and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to better support treatment courts in North Dakota. House Bill 1347 would clarify the roles and responsibilities of the agencies involved with treatment courts throughout North Dakota. Clarifying roles in statute would ensure that HHS can best perform our duty within the scope of the statute, mission, and policies of our agency.

The proposed language regarding the Department of Health and Human Services allows for oversight and flexibility in establishing behavioral health services in each region based on the court's needs and with consideration of regional differences. Currently, the treatment providers in each of these courts vary. For example, in some regions the services are provided by the public behavioral health clinic and in other regions it is provided by a private provider contracted with the state. Flexibility is necessary to ensure regional differences and resources are considered and treatment programs are adequate, available, and adhere to best practice standards.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to try to answer any questions. Thank you.

HB 1347
Senate Judiciary
March 18, 2025
Testimony of Jessica Throlson

Chair Larson and members of the Judiciary Committee, for the record, my name is Jessica Throlson. I am the specialized dockets manager for the ND Court System.

In this testimony, I will be using the term “treatment courts” instead of “drug courts” to reflect both the house and senate passing HB 1030, which changes the name of drug courts to treatment courts. HB 1347 is before you today to provide a basic construct for the roles and responsibilities associated with Treatment Courts in the state of North Dakota. We currently have 14 adult and juvenile specialized dockets operating in North Dakota and have done so for approximately 25 years. The map attached to my testimony shows the current locations of specialized dockets in the state.

Throughout their existence, we have worked to create treatment courts/specialized dockets through a largely unstructured approach. We currently have 6 adult treatment courts that are supervised by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR), 6 juvenile treatment courts, 1 adult treatment court in Richland County and 1 veterans treatment court in Grand Forks supervised by the court system. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has worked with us to coordinate and implement treatment required for these courts.

As these treatment courts/specialized dockets are a part of the court system, an internal structure was deemed to be necessary to “vet” the creation of treatment courts/specialized dockets. In 2019, the supreme court through its rule making authority created the Interdisciplinary Committee on Specialized Dockets through [Administrative Rule 60](#). This committee reviews requests to create specialized dockets and makes recommendations on the creation of them to the supreme court. This process works well for an internal structure to review and provide structure as well as guidance for treatment courts. However, we have no equivalent to guide all stakeholders in this process. Therefore, representatives from DOCR, DHHS and the Court System met over the last year to attempt to provide a more thorough collaboration/coordination between the justice system stakeholders.

It is through this collaboration and coordination that HB 1347 came into being. I urge a do pass and am available for questions.

**SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
SENATOR DIANE LARSON, CHAIR
MARCH 18, 2025**

**TOM ERHARDT, CHIEF PAROLE AND PROBATION OFFICER
PRESENTING TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1347**

Chair Larson and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Tom Erhardt, and I am the Chief Parole and Probation Officer of North Dakota Parole, Probation and Pretrial Services, a division of the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The Parole, Probation and Pretrial Services Division is responsible for delivering correctional supervision to over seven thousand adults released from prison by the authority of the North Dakota Parole Board, sentenced to supervised by probation or ordered to pretrial supervision by district courts, and transferred to North Dakota via the Interstate Compact for Adult Offender Supervision. Our staff of approximately one hundred fifty work out of seventeen district offices throughout the state. I stand before you today to provide testimony in support of House Bill 1347.

House Bill 1030 has been passed by the House Senate awaiting the Governor's signature and changes "drug courts" to "treatment courts" in statute. For purposes of this testimony, I will refer to all as "treatment courts". The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) Parole, Probation, and Pretrial Services Division supports eight treatment courts in North Dakota. Veteran's Treatment Court in Grand Forks, treatment court in Bismarck, Jamestown, two in Fargo, Grand Forks, Wahpeton, and Minot. The division

provides supervision and case management for participants in each of these treatment courts by assigning probation officers and drug court coordinators to the team to fulfill this role. DOCR provides a program manager who supervises staff, manages the program, coordinates treatment services in some areas, and coordinates of program evaluation. House bill 1347 clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the agencies involved with treatment courts throughout North Dakota. Throughout the past year leaders from the DOCR, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Office of the State Court Administrator have met to discuss this issue and have all agreed that clarifying roles in statute would ensure that each entity would perform its duties within the scope of the statute, mission, and policies of each agency.

In Section 1 of the bill a new section to chapter 27-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is created. It lists that the DOCR shall supervise offenders sentenced to probation in accordance with the department policies. Next, it states that the Department of Health and Human Services shall oversee treatment services according to the policies, procedures, and best practices of the department. Finally, it states that the district court shall provide judicial direction, guidance, and coordination with all approved treatment and compliance related to specialized dockets.

Adult treatment courts in North Dakota have proven effective. A 2022 outcome evaluation of adult DWI/drug court programs by North Dakota State University showed that participating in a drug court in North Dakota reduces one-year and two-year recidivism rates by 10% on average, and up to 20% for the

highest performing program. These programs are an essential, cost-effective alternative to incarceration that works for those defendants who successfully complete them. Providing statutory guidance in the roles and responsibilities of each entity will ensure that the framework for future successes is set far beyond current agency leadership.

Please consider a “do pass” on House Bill 1347. I will stand to answer any questions I can. Thank you.