

Testimony to the: **INTERIM JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

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CONCERNING SEX OFFENDER REGISTRAION STATUTE

Chairman Hogue and members of the committee, my name is Aaron Birst and I am with the Association of Counties. In addition to my duties as legal counsel with NDACo, I also act as the executive director of our State's Attorney membership group. This sex offender registration statute review was requested and supported by the State's Attorneys last session.

North Dakota's registration requirements have played a critical role in ensuring the safety of North Dakota's residents. North Dakota has been a leader in developing sound public policy in dealing with these types of offenders. The Attorney Generals' office, prosecutors, law enforcement and the legislature have worked hard to implement rational policy to ensure public safety with reasonable requirements on convicted offenders.

However, over the years through both technological advancement and changes in the registration requirements, it is time to again review our statute to make sure we are providing the best system for both the public and the offenders.

Going into the 2015 legislative session, I received a number of suggestions to improve the statute. Given the short time frame and the time line pressures of the session, it was determined a study could better flush out these issues.

A few examples for improvement to the statute (in no particular order) are as follows:

- Consider breaking out offenders against children from sex offenders.
- Consider harmonizing time frames for registration. For example, changes in vehicle or online identity have 3 days to report the changes while changes in employment or school allows 5 days.
- Consider clarifying changes to online identities include additional online identities.

There may be some other improvements including technological that may be suggest and we look forward to reviewing and working with the committee on those suggestions.

As a final note, State's Attorneys recognize the importance of the registration requirements and the public safety they have provided. However, we are also fully aware making too many difficult requirements on offenders may have an inverse relation on public safety forcing many offenders to "go underground." That is why any proposal in this matter requires careful and deliberate consideration.