

TESTIMONY OF

Captain Luke Hendrickson, North Dakota Highway Patrol

Chairman Porter and members of the Committee,

My name is Luke Hendrickson, I am the Administrative Services Commander for the North Dakota Highway Patrol. I am here to provide testimony in opposition of HB1341.

The NDHP oversees the security of the Capitol building, and all buildings on the Capitol complex. Elected officials, North Dakota Supreme Court justices, and legislative members work at the capitol. It is our primary mission to keep our public officials, employees, and patrons safe while in the Capitol. If firearms or dangerous weapons are allowed into the Capitol building, the likelihood of a violent incident occurring will be heightened. Our current security measures and responses would have to be changed for that possibility.

With this bill an individual would be able to carry a firearm or dangerous weapon with a concealed weapons permit, current constitutional carry laws or open carry. To obtain a Class 1 concealed weapons license, applicants must pass an open book test, demonstrate familiarity with a firearm, and successfully complete a certified proficiency exercise; however, a Class 2 license simply requires the successful completion of an open book test. To constitutionally carry all an individual needs is to be 18 years of age, proof of 30-day residency on a ND identification card or ND driver's license or a concealed weapons license/permit issued by a state that has reciprocity with North Dakota, and not be prohibited by state or federal law from possessing a firearm. There are no on-going qualifications or proficiency tests once a conceal carry permit is issued or for someone carrying a concealed weapon under our constitutional carry laws.

In comparison law enforcement officers undergo thorough, multiple-day training in active threat response that provides instruction on responding to active violence threats. It teaches tactics to diffuse threatening situations while minimizing injury or death. This training is scenario based, testing the officer's decision-making skills as well as marksmanship under stressful conditions. Law enforcement officers are trained to neutralize the threat in an attempt to save lives. In addition, law enforcement conducts weapons training throughout the year and must qualify with their weapon annually.

Law enforcement's priority during an active threat response situation is the safety of everyone involved. The threat during this type of situation is determined by the actions of those involved, and who may be holding a weapon. This bill may cause confusion among first responders during an active threat situation as it is extremely difficult to determine who the real threat may be if more individuals are carrying and displaying firearms.

The highway patrol provides security and protection at the capitol, and visitors are screened for weapons. Sworn officers and capitol security officers are on-site and monitoring cameras at all hours, and they're able to provide a quick response when needed. The need for a citizen or team member to carry a weapon while in the capitol is minimized by these factors. In fact, more individuals carrying weapons, including those who may not be proficient in the use of the weapon, creates a security concern.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer questions.