

**2023 HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS**

**HB 1307**

# 2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Appropriations Committee**  
Brynhild Haugland Room, State Capitol

HB 1307  
2/1/2023

BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a back the blue grant program; and to provide for a report.
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**9:32 AM Chairman Vigesaa-** Meeting was called to order and roll call was taken:

**Members present;** Chairman Vigesaa, Representative Kempenich, Representative B. Anderson, Representative Bellew, Representative Brandenburg, Representative Hanson, Representative Kreidt, Representative Martinson, Representative Mitskog, Representative Meier, Representative Mock, Representative Monson, Representative Nathe, Representative J. Nelson, Representative O'Brien, Representative Pyle, Representative Richter, Representative Sanford, Representative Schatz, Representative Schobinger, Representative Strinden, Representative J. Stemen and Representative Swiontek.

**Discussion Topics:**

- Peace Officer Bonuses
- Amendment Language

**Representative Roers Jones-** Introduces HB 1307 and offered an amendment. (Testimony #18470)

**Donnell Preskey Hushka-Government/Public Relations NDAC-** Testifies in favor of HB 1307 and offers an amendment and Christmas tree version (Testimony #18515)

**Stephanie Dassinger Engebretson- Chief of Police Association of ND -** Testifies in favor of HB 1307 (Testimony #18481)

**Blair Thoreson- ND Peace Officers Association-** Testifies in favor of HB 1307 with the amendments proposed.

**Dey Muckle- Golden Valley Sheriff –** Testifies in favor.

**Frank Senn, Chief of Police, Beulah-** Testifies in favor.

**Becky Keller, Finance Director Attorney General Office-** Oral Neutral Testimony

**Chairman Vigesaa** Closed the meeting for HB 1307 10:30 AM

*Risa Berube, Committee Clerk*

# 2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Appropriations Committee Brynhild Haugland Room, State Capitol

HB 1307  
2/17/2023

BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the attorney general for a back the blue grant program; and to provide for a report.
---

**11:27 AM Chairman Vigesaa-** Meeting was called to order and roll call was taken:

**Members present;** Chairman Vigesaa, Representative B. Anderson, Representative Bellew, Representative Brandenburg, Representative Hanson, Representative Kreidt, Representative Martinson, Representative Mitskog, Representative Meier, Representative Mock, Representative Monson, Representative Nathe, Representative J. Nelson, Representative O'Brien, , Representative Richter, Representative Sanford, Representative Schatz, Representative Schobinger, Representative Strinden, and Representative G. Stemen

**Members not Present** Representative Kempenich, Representative Pyle and Representative Swiontek

### Discussion Topics:

- Amendment

**Representative J. Nelson** Adopt the amendment 23.0915.01001 and further amended to include correctional officers. (Testimony # 18470)

**Representative Strinden-** Seconds the motion.

Committee discussion Roll call vote

Representatives	Vote
Representative Don Vigesaa	Y
Representative Keith Kempenich	A
Representative Bert Anderson	Y
Representative Larry Bellew	Y
Representative Mike Brandenburg	Y
Representative Karla Rose Hanson	Y
Representative Gary Kreidt	Y
Representative Bob Martinson	Y
Representative Lisa Meier	Y
Representative Alisa Mitskog	Y
Representative Corey Mock	Y
Representative David Monson	Y
Representative Mike Nathe	Y
Representative Jon O. Nelson	Y
Representative Emily O'Brien	Y

Representative Brandy Pyle	A
Representative David Richter	Y
Representative Mark Sanford	Y
Representative Mike Schatz	Y
Representative Randy A. Schobinger	Y
Representative Greg Stemen	Y
Representative Michelle Strinden	Y
Representative Steve Swiontek	A

**Motion Carries 20-0-3**

**Representative O'Brien-** Moves for a Do Pass as Amended

**Representative J. Stemen-** Seconds the motion.

Committee discussion- Roll call vote

<b>Representatives</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Representative Don Vigesaa	Y
Representative Keith Kempenich	A
Representative Bert Anderson	Y
Representative Larry Bellew	Y
Representative Mike Brandenburg	Y
Representative Karla Rose Hanson	Y
Representative Gary Kreidt	Y
Representative Bob Martinson	Y
Representative Lisa Meier	Y
Representative Alisa Mitskog	Y
Representative Corey Mock	Y
Representative David Monson	Y
Representative Mike Nathe	Y
Representative Jon O. Nelson	Y
Representative Emily O'Brien	Y
Representative Brandy Pyle	A
Representative David Richter	Y
Representative Mark Sanford	Y
Representative Mike Schatz	Y
Representative Randy A. Schobinger	Y
Representative Greg Stemen	Y
Representative Michelle Strinden	Y
Representative Steve Swiontek	A

**Motion Carries Representative O'Brien will carry the bill.**

**11:40 AM Chairman Vigesaa** Closed the meeting for HB 1307

*Risa Berube, Committee Clerk*

*OR*  
*181*  
*2-17-23*

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1307

Page 1, line 10, remove "Of the funding appropriated in this section, \$1,250,000"

Page 1, remove line 11

Page 1, line 12, replace "working in a law enforcement capacity" with "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. 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"

Page 1, remove lines 13 through 23

Page 2, remove lines 1 and 2

Page 2, line 3, replace "c. Shall" with "Law enforcement agencies receiving funding under this section shall report to the attorney general regarding the use and effectiveness of the funding. The attorney general shall"

Page 2, line 3, after the second "the" insert "use and effectiveness of grant funds and the"

Renumber accordingly

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**HB 1307: Appropriations Committee (Rep. Vigesaa, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS** and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (20 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 3 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1307 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 1, line 10, remove "Of the funding appropriated in this section, \$1,250,000"

Page 1, remove line 11

Page 1, line 12, replace "working in a law enforcement capacity" with "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. 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"

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Page 2, line 3, after the second "the" insert "use and effectiveness of grant funds and the"

Renumber accordingly

**2023 SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**HB 1307**

# 2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Workforce Development Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

HB 1307  
3/17/2023

Relating to an appropriation to the attorney general for a back the blue grant program; and to provide for a report.
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9:01 AM **Chairman Wobbema** called the hearing to order. **Senators Wobbema, Axtman, Elkin, Larson, Sickler, Piepkorn** were present.

### Discussion Topics:

- Law enforcement support
- Correctional officers support
- Grant funds
- Local agencies
- Recruitment
- Bonus retention
- Bonus distribution

9:02 AM **Representative Roers Jones** introduced HB1307 and testified in favor verbally.

9:07 AM **Donnell Preskey, Executive Director North Dakota Sheriffs and Deputies Association, North Dakota Association of Counties**, testified in favor. #25500.

9:15 AM **Stephanie Dassinger Engebretson, on behalf of North Dakota Chief of Police Association**, testified in favor verbally.

9:22 AM **Blair Thorson, representing North Dakota Police Officer Association**, testimony in favor verbally.

9:24 AM **Sarah Couture, Grant Supervisor, Office of the Attorney General**, provided information neutral verbally.

9:26 AM **Becky Keller, Finance Director Office of the Attorney General**, provided information neutral verbally.

9:30 AM **Chairman Wobbema** closed the hearing.

*Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk*



# 2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Workforce Development Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

HB 1307  
3/17/2023

Relating to an appropriation to the attorney general for a back the blue grant program; and to provide for a report.

10:12 AM **Chairman Wobbema** called the meeting to order. **Senators Wobbema, Axtman, Elkin, Larson, Sickler** were present. Senator Piepkorn was absent.

### Discussion Topics:

- Committee action

**Chairman Wobbema** called for discussion.

**Senator Larson** moved **DO PASS**.

**Senator Axtman** seconded the motion.

**Senator Larson** withdraws motion.

**Senator Axtman** withdraws motion.

**Senator Larson** moved **DO Pass** and **REFER** to **APPROPRIATIONS**.

**Senator Axtman** seconded the motion.

Roll call vote.

<b>Senators</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Senator Michael A. Wobbema	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	Y
Senator Jay Elkin	N
Senator Diane Larson	Y
Senator Merrill Piepkorn	N
Senator Jonathan Sickler	N

Motion failed 3-3-0.

**Senator Sickler** moved **DO NOT PASS**.

**Senator Elkin** seconded the motion.

Roll call vote.

<b>Senators</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Senator Michael A. Wobbema	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	Y
Senator Jay Elkin	Y
Senator Diane Larson	N
Senator Merrill Piepkorn	Y
Senator Jonathan Sickler	Y

Motion passed 5-1-0.

**Senator Wobbema** will carry HB 1307.

10:38 AM **Chairman Wobbema** closed the meeting.

*Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**HB 1307, as engrossed: Workforce Development Committee (Sen. Wobbema, Chairman)** recommends **DO NOT PASS** (5 YEAS, 1 NAY, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed HB 1307 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill affects workforce development.

**2023 SENATE APPROPRIATIONS**

**HB 1307**

# 2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Appropriations - Government Operations Division Red River Room, State Capitol

HB 1307  
3/27/2023

A bill for an act to provide an appropriation to the Attorney General for a Back the Blue grant program; and to provide for a report.
---

9:43 AM Chairman Wanzek called the meeting to order.  
Senators Wanzek, Erbele, Roers, Dwyer, and Vedaa are present.

### Discussion Topics:

- Funds
- Bill comparison, SB 2003 and HB 1307
- Peace officer candidates
- Correctional officers
- Recruitment and retention incentive
- Agency size/benefit ratio
- Unfilled ND law enforcement jobs
- Grant distribution method
- “Zero matching funds” option for small departments

9:43 AM Shannon Roers Jones, ND District 46 Representative, testified. (No written testimony)

9:54 AM Donnell Presky, Lobbyist Badge #41, ND Association of Counties, testified.  
(No written testimony)

10:07 AM Stephanie Dassinger-Engebretson, ND League of Cities, testified. (No written testimony)

10:09 AM Blair Thoreson, ND Peace Officers Association, testified. (No written testimony)

10:09 AM De Muckle, Golden Valley County Sheriff, testified. (No written testimony)

10:16 AM Frank Senn, Beulah Police Chief, testified. ( No written testimony)

10:21 Becky Keller, Finance Administrator, ND Attorney General Office, testified. (No written testimony)

10:23 Chairman Wanzek closed the meeting.

*Carol Thompson, Committee Clerk*

# 2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Appropriations - Government Operations Division Red River Room, State Capitol

HB 1307  
3/29/2023

A bill for an act to provide an appropriation to the Attorney General for a Back the Blue grant program; and to provide for a report.
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10:50 AM Chairman Wanzek opened the meeting.  
Senators Wanzek, Dwyer, J. Roers, Vedaa, and Erbele were present.

### Discussion Topics:

- Amendments
- Small law enforcement agencies
- County correctional officers
- Fund distribution

10:51 AM Donnell Presky, Badge #41, Lobbyist for ND Association of Counties, testified.  
(No written testimony)

11:01 AM Chairman Wanzek closed the meeting.

*Carol Thompson, Committee Clerk*

# 2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Appropriations - Government Operations Division Red River Room, State Capitol

HB 1307  
3/30/2023

A bill for an act to provide an appropriation to the Attorney General for a Back the Blue grant program; and to provide for a report.

10:11 AM Chairman Wanzek opened the meeting.  
Senators Wanzek, Dwyer, J. Roers, Vedaa, and Erbele were present.

### Discussion Topics:

- Bill overview
- Amendments
- One-time funding

10:14 AM Senator Dwyer moved to amend HB 1307 by reducing the one-time funding amount to 3.5 million, awarding \$750,000 to law enforcement agencies with fewer than ten licensed peace officers, providing an average of \$2,100 to each officer in agencies of ten or fewer and \$1300 to officers in agencies with more than ten licensed peace officers.  
Senator Erbele seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Terry M. Wanzek	Y
Senator Michael Dwyer	Y
Senator Robert Erbele	Y
Senator Jim P. Roers	Y
Senator Shawn Vedaa	y

Motion passed 5-0-0

10:17 AM Senator Dwyer moved a Do Pass as Amended recommendation for HB 1307.  
Senator Erbele seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Terry M. Wanzek	Y
Senator Michael Dwyer	Y
Senator Robert Erbele	Y
Senator Jim P. Roers	Y
Senator Shawn Vedaa	y

Motion passed 5-0-0

Senator Dwyer will carry the bill.

10:18 AM Chairman Wanzek closed the meeting.

*Carol Thompson, Committee Clerk*

# 2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Appropriations Committee Roughrider Room, State Capitol

HB 1307  
3/31/2023

AN ACT to provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the state fair association.

9:15 AM Vice Chair Krebsbach opened the meeting on HB 1307.

Members present: Senators Bekkedahl, Krebsbach, Burckhard, Davison, Dever, Dwyer, Erbele, Kreun, Mathern, Meyer, Roers, Schaible, Sorvaag, Vedaa, Wanzek, and Rust.

### Discussion Topics:

- Committee action

9:16 AM Senator Dwyer introduced the bill.

9:22 AM Senator Dwyer moved to adopt amendment. LC 23.0915.02001

9:22 AM Senator Erbele seconded.

Roll call vote.

Senators	Vote
Senator Brad Bekkedahl	Y
Senator Karen K. Krebsbach	Y
Senator Randy A. Burckhard	Y
Senator Kyle Davison	Y
Senator Dick Dever	Y
Senator Michael Dwyer	Y
Senator Robert Erbele	Y
Senator Curt Kreun	Y
Senator Tim Mathern	Y
Senator Scott Meyer	Y
Senator Jim P. Roers	Y
Senator David S. Rust	Y
Senator Donald Schaible	A
Senator Ronald Sorvaag	A
Senator Shawn Vedaa	Y
Senator Terry M. Wanzek	Y

Motion passed. 14-0-2

9:24 AM Senator Dwyer moved DO PASS as amended.

9:24 AM Senator Wanzek seconded.



Roll call vote.

<b>Senators</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Senator Brad Bekkedahl	Y
Senator Karen K. Krebsbach	Y
Senator Randy A. Burckhard	Y
Senator Kyle Davison	Y
Senator Dick Dever	Y
Senator Michael Dwyer	Y
Senator Robert Erbele	Y
Senator Curt Kreun	Y
Senator Tim Mathern	Y
Senator Scott Meyer	Y
Senator Jim P. Roers	Y
Senator David S. Rust	Y
Senator Donald Schaible	Y
Senator Ronald Sorvaag	Y
Senator Shawn Vedaa	Y
Senator Terry M. Wanzek	Y

Motion passed. 16-0-0

Senator Dwyer will carry the bill.

9:26 AM Vice Chair Krebsbach closed the meeting.

*Justin Boone on behalf of Kathleen Hall, Committee Clerk*

44  
 3-30-23

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1307

Page 1, line 7, replace "\$5,000,000" with "\$3,500,000"

Page 1, line 14, after the period insert "Of the funding available under this program, a sum of at least \$750,000 must be granted to local law enforcement agencies employing ten or fewer employees working in a law enforcement capacity."

Renumber accordingly

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT:

House Bill No. 1307 - Attorney General - Senate Action

	Base Budget	House Version	Senate Changes	Senate Version
Back the blue grants		\$5,000,000	(\$1,500,000)	\$3,500,000
Total all funds	\$0	\$5,000,000	(\$1,500,000)	\$3,500,000
Less estimated income	0	0	0	0
General fund	\$0	\$5,000,000	(\$1,500,000)	\$3,500,000
FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Department 125 - Attorney General - Detail of Senate Changes

	Reduces Funding for Back the Blue Grants <sup>1</sup>	Total Senate Changes
Back the blue grants	(\$1,500,000)	(\$1,500,000)
Total all funds	(\$1,500,000)	(\$1,500,000)
Less estimated income	0	0
General fund	(\$1,500,000)	(\$1,500,000)
FTE	0.00	0.00

<sup>1</sup> One-time funding is reduced by \$1.5 million from the general fund to provide a total of \$3.5 million for back the blue grants. Of the \$3.5 million, \$750,000 must be granted to local law enforcement agencies with 10 or fewer law enforcement employees. The House provided \$5 million from the general fund for back the blue grants.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**HB 1307, as engrossed: Appropriations Committee (Sen. Bekkedahl, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS** and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (16 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed HB 1307 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar. This bill affects workforce development.

Page 1, line 7, replace "\$5,000,000" with "\$3,500,000"

Page 1, line 14, after the period insert "Of the funding available under this program, a sum of at least \$750,000 must be granted to local law enforcement agencies employing ten or fewer employees working in a law enforcement capacity."

Renumber accordingly

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT:**

**House Bill No. 1307 - Attorney General - Senate Action**

	Base Budget	House Version	Senate Changes	Senate Version
Back the blue grants		\$5,000,000	(\$1,500,000)	\$3,500,000
Total all funds	\$0	\$5,000,000	(\$1,500,000)	\$3,500,000
Less estimated income	0	0	0	0
General fund	\$0	\$5,000,000	(\$1,500,000)	\$3,500,000
FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Department 125 - Attorney General - Detail of Senate Changes**

	Reduces Funding for Back the Blue Grants <sup>1</sup>	Total Senate Changes
Back the blue grants	(\$1,500,000)	(\$1,500,000)
Total all funds	(\$1,500,000)	(\$1,500,000)
Less estimated income	0	0
General fund	(\$1,500,000)	(\$1,500,000)
FTE	0.00	0.00

<sup>1</sup> One-time funding is reduced by \$1.5 million from the general fund to provide a total of \$3.5 million for back the blue grants. Of the \$3.5 million, \$750,000 must be granted to local law enforcement agencies with 10 or fewer law enforcement employees. The House provided \$5 million from the general fund for back the blue grants.

**TESTIMONY**

**HB 1307**

23.0915.01001  
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for  
Representative Roers Jones  
January 31, 2023

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1307

Page 1, line 10, remove "Of the funding appropriated in this section, \$1,250,000"

Page 1, remove line 11

Page 1, line 12, replace "working in a law enforcement capacity" with "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 employed by the city or county law enforcement agency compared to the total number of licensed peace officers employed by all city and county law enforcement agencies. Funding appropriated in this section may be used for providing hiring and retention bonuses to new and current law enforcement officers and providing tuition and fee payments on behalf of law enforcement trainees"

Page 1, remove lines 13 through 23

Page 2, remove lines 1 and 2

Page 2, line 3, replace "c. Shall" with "Law enforcement agencies receiving funding under this section shall report to the attorney general regarding the use and effectiveness of the funding. The attorney general shall"

Page 2, line 3, after the second "the" insert "use and effectiveness of grant funds and the"

Renumber accordingly

February 1, 2023  
House Appropriations Committee  
HB 1307  
Rep. Vigesaa, Chair

For the record, I am Stephanie Dassinger Engebretson. 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 1307. This bill creates a back the blue grant program to support retention and recruitment efforts of local law enforcement. The Chiefs of Police support both the original bill and the amendments to the bill; however, the Chiefs believe that the amended bill will have a stronger impact on recruitment and retention efforts because it will get the money to police departments more quickly and ensures small departments with less resources can still access the funds. The elimination of an application also cuts down on the required administrative duties, causing less strain to already limited administrative resources.

As you have heard, local law enforcement is having a difficult time recruiting and retaining the right individuals to protect and serve our communities as law enforcement officers. Ms. Presky's survey on recruitment and retention of local law enforcement officers also included an open-ended question about asking sheriffs and police chiefs to "provide a narrative to describe the challenges your county / city is experiencing related to recruitment or retention of officers." A couple of the police chiefs' responses are very demonstrative about the issues local law enforcement is facing:

"The number of applicants is scary. It usually leads to starting over until we can find a qualified candidate. All of this costs money and puts stress on the rest of the staff."

"Only a 2 person department, requiring lots of on call time on top of work time. It doesn't take long for an officer to realize they can go somewhere else, make more money for less time invested to their job. There are safety issues too. We respond to serious calls with 1 to 2 officers whereas other departments have adequate back up to safely execute their duties."

HB 1307, with the amendments, would give local law enforcement extra resources to address these recruitment and retention issues. The bill, as amended, would also provide departments the flexibility to structure their efforts to their unique needs. The Chiefs of Police respectfully request adoption of the amendments and a "Do Pass" recommendation on HB 1307.



Testimony Prepared for the  
House Appropriations  
By: Donnell Preskey, NDACo  
February 1, 2023



**RE: HB 1307 "Back the Blue" LE Grants**

Chairman Vigesaa and committee members, I'm Donnell Preskey with the North Dakota Association of Counties. In my role at NDACo, I serve as the executive director for the North Dakota Sheriffs and Deputies Association.

The Sheriffs & Deputies Association supports HB 1307 and requests the committee to adopt the amendment presented by Rep. Shannon Roers Jones. The bill as amended will position the state to truly accomplish the intended goal being set out in this "Back the Blue and **Brown**" initiative.

The greatest change the amendment makes is removing the 50% match from a city or county and instead providing "Back the Blue" grant funding directly to the local law enforcement agency based on the number of licensed officers. This is an important change primarily because of timing and effectiveness.

Local governments set their budgets for 2023 a few months ago. Very few counties approved bonuses for officers. Only four of 36 counties that responded to a quick survey indicated they provided bonuses. If the amendment is not adopted, a very slim number of counties will be able to utilize the grant this year, therefore not accomplishing the intent of this initiative. While counties could plan to provide bonuses to qualify for the grant during their next budget cycle; this will delay the funds going to departments and officers until 2024 or closer to 2025.

It's also important to recognize that some counties don't have the resources to provide bonuses to their law enforcement. If the bill is not amended, those officers would be put at a greater disadvantage and more than likely lead to those officers leaving to go to another department that was positioned to take advantage of the incentive.

Based on information from the North Dakota Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board, there are 1,750 licensed officers employed by city and county agencies (that includes individuals working in multiple agencies). Therefore, the \$5 million translates to \$2,850 / an officer. Again, as outlined in the amendment, the Chief or Sheriff would have the discretion in deciding how to use the funds for hiring and retention bonuses or paying tuition for trainees.

Bottom line, the proposed amendment will allow for "Back the Blue" funds to be utilized for how they truly are intended. We strongly support the amendments to HB 1307 as this will provide every local law enforcement agency with "Back the Blue" funds that can be utilized in a timely manner to hopefully secure the workforce necessary to keep our great state safe.

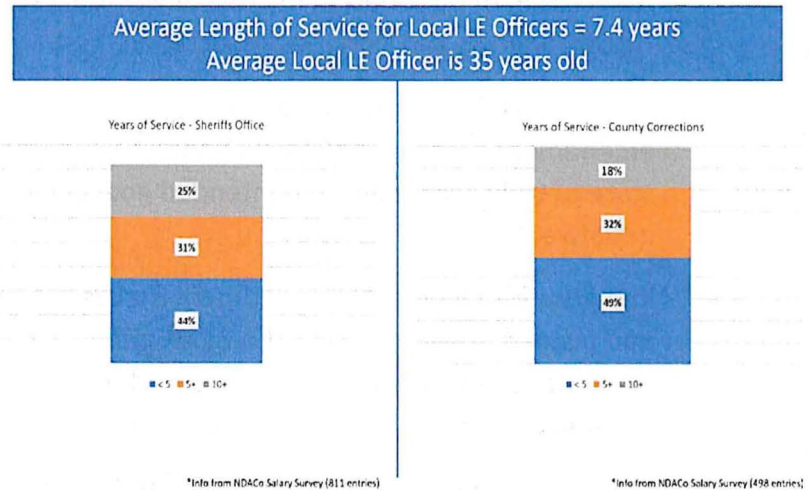
NDACo conducted a survey of local law enforcement on recruitment and retention during the 2021-2023 interim. The survey was sent to Sheriffs, Jail Administrators and Chiefs. The data represents responses from 66 local law enforcement departments including 44 Sheriffs and Jail Administrators and 22 Chiefs of Police.

The data illustrates the struggle local agencies have in hiring individuals. Based on the 66 departments responding to the survey, there were 1189 licensed officer positions budgeted for in 2021, and at any given time about 10 percent of the positions were open.

The average local law enforcement officer is 35 years old and serves for 7.4 years. The first five years are the most critical in retaining officers.

Of the County Sheriff's Office and County Corrections Employees, 80% have under 10 years of experience.

Most of the responding agencies experienced a less than 5% turnover ratio; however, a substantial number of agencies experienced somewhere between 11% and 49% turnover.



Based on the responses and narratives provided by Sheriffs and Chiefs, the struggle of dealing with vacant positions is constant. Almost 60% indicated that they “always” or “usually” have a delay in filling positions because of lack of applicants and interest. Even more concerning is that when asked if they have filled a position with a candidate, they felt was under qualified at the time – nearly half answered “Yes”.

Pay is the greatest reason officers are leaving their jobs. According to the latest NDACo Salary Survey, the average salary for our county law enforcement folks serving at the Sheriff's Office and Jail is \$58,000.

A significant discrepancy is evident when you compare the salary ranges in small vs large counties. For example, A chief deputy in Griggs County makes \$42,000 while a chief deputy in Williams County makes \$112,000 (3 times as much).

Most officers leaving their jobs are going to another local department – highlighting again the competition for these positions within our state and between departments. The second greatest draw is a non-law enforcement position.

Pay and benefits were ranked as the top assets in retaining officers. In addition, almost half of the respondents commented that increasing pay and benefits was a necessary strategy to attract and retain workers.



Testimony Prepared for the  
Senate Workforce Development Committee  
By: Donnell Preskey, NDACo  
March 15, 2023



**RE: HB 1307 “Back the Blue” LE Grants**

Chairman Wobbema and committee members, I’m Donnell Preskey with the North Dakota Association of Counties. In my role at NDACo, I serve as the executive director for the North Dakota Sheriffs and Deputies Association.

The Sheriffs & Deputies Association strongly supports HB 1307 and appreciates the work of the sponsors to support local law enforcement through this “Back the Blue and BROWN” initiative. We worked with Representative Shannon Roers Jones and the House Appropriations committee on amendments that the House adopted. The bill as it stands now, truly will accomplish this bill’s intentions. It will provide funds to every local police and sheriff’s office to use for hiring and retention bonuses. The House also expanded the bill to allow for the funds to be used for recruitment and retention of corrections officers.

Based on information from the North Dakota Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board, there are 1,750 licensed officers employed by city and county agencies (that includes individuals working in multiple agencies). Therefore, the \$5 million translates to \$2,850 / an officer. But it’s important to note that as this bill was developed, the Chief or Sheriff has the discretion in deciding how to use the funds for hiring and retention bonuses or paying tuition for trainees.

A summary of data collected from Sheriffs and Chiefs on recruitment and retention issues in the state is included on the back side of this testimony. It outlines the challenges our local agencies are having in hiring and retaining officers.

This bill will have an impact in our state. Every local law enforcement agency will be provided “Back the Blue” funds that can be utilized in a timely manner to hopefully secure the workforce necessary to keep our great state safe.

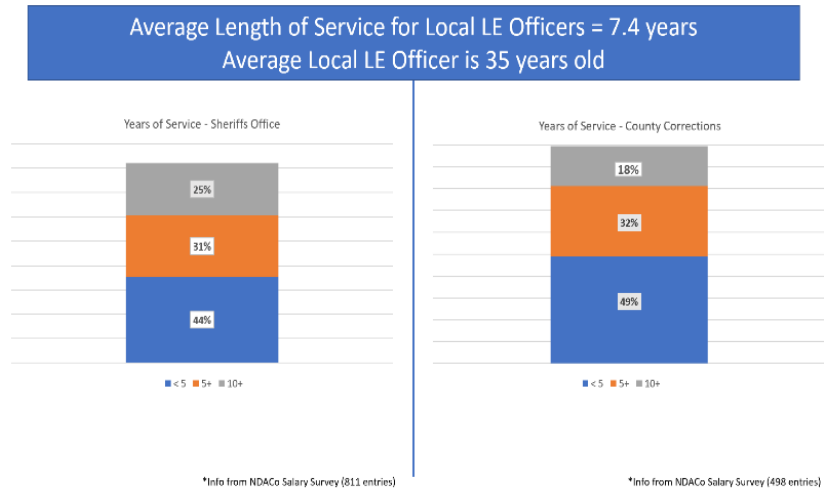
NDACo conducted a survey of local law enforcement on recruitment and retention during the 2021-2023 interim. The survey was sent to Sheriffs, Jail Administrators and Chiefs. The data represents responses from 66 local law enforcement departments including 44 Sheriffs and Jail Administrators and 22 Chiefs of Police.

The data illustrates the struggle local agencies have in hiring individuals. Based on the 66 departments responding to the survey, there were 1189 licensed officer positions budgeted for in 2021, and at any given time about 10 percent of the positions were open.

The average local law enforcement officer is 35 years old and serves for 7.4 years. The first five years are the most critical in retaining officers.

Of the County Sheriff's Office and County Corrections Employees, 80% have under 10 years of experience.

Most of the responding agencies experienced a less than 5% turnover ratio; however, a substantial number of agencies experienced somewhere between 11% and 49% turnover.



Based on the responses and narratives provided by Sheriffs and Chiefs, the struggle of dealing with vacant positions is constant. Almost 60% indicated that they “always” or “usually” have a delay in filling positions because of lack of applicants and interest. Even more concerning is that when asked if they have filled a position with a candidate, they felt was under qualified at the time – nearly half answered “Yes”.

Pay is the greatest reason officers are leaving their jobs. According to the latest NDACo Salary Survey, the average salary for our county law enforcement folks serving at the Sheriff's Office and Jail is \$58,000.

A significant discrepancy is evident when you compare the salary ranges in small vs large counties. For example, A chief deputy in Griggs County makes \$42,000 while a chief deputy in Williams County makes \$112,000 (3 times as much).

Most officers leaving their jobs are going to another local department – highlighting again the competition for these positions within our state and between departments. The second greatest draw is a non-law enforcement position.

Pay and benefits were ranked as the top assets in retaining officers. In addition, almost half of the respondents commented that increasing pay and benefits was a necessary strategy to attract and retain workers.