

## News

# Building Safer Communities: North Dakota's Commitment to Recovery and Reentry

APRIL 29, 2025 | BY CELESTE GANDER



On April 29, Governor Kelly Armstrong held a ceremony to sign a series of bills developed through North Dakota's recent participation in the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI) funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), a component of the Office of Justice Programs in the Department of Justice Office. Technical assistance for this effort was provided by the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI).

The package of three bills represents North Dakota's next phase of public safety improvements that place reentry, recovery, and rehabilitation center stage. As a whole, the policies assist law enforcement and prosecutors in addressing the underlying causes of crime through deflection and early treatment interventions, support prison officials in prioritizing effective case management, and strengthen collaborations between state agencies and community partners who play a critical role in successful reintegration following release from incarceration. North Dakota sets the standard for taking a multi-pronged approach to public safety that prioritizes recovery for those experiencing behavioral health challenges, prepares people leaving incarceration for successful reintegration, and promotes effective use of state resources.

North Dakota's criminal justice system findings are clear. Behavioral health needs are prevalent across all levels of North Dakota's criminal justice system. Notably, drug and alcohol offenses have made up the majority of North Dakota prison admissions over the past decade. Additionally, returning citizens face barriers to success, such as finding affordable housing, accessing behavioral health care, securing state-issued IDs, and paying criminal justice fines and fees, among many others.

This trifecta of data and research-driven policies was sponsored by Representative Lawrence Klemin, championed by Lieutenant Governor Strinden and public safety leaders across the state, and adopted by the legislature with overwhelming support. Now, signed by Governor Armstrong, this package propels [the administration's agenda](#) to move addiction and recovery resources upstream and improve public safety for all North Dakotans.

### 2025 Legislation and Summaries

Links to bills:

- [HB 1425 - Overview | North Dakota Legislative Branch](#)
- [HB 1417 - Overview | North Dakota Legislative Branch](#)

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- [HB 1549 – Overview | North Dakota Legislative Branch](#)

#### Policy Summaries

- [JRI Full Package \(as passed\)](#)
- [HB 1425 Explainer for Senate Floor](#)

#### Support from Governor Armstrong’s Office

- [Armstrong Signs Package of Bills Designed to Support Recovery and Reentry, Reduce Recidivism](#)
- [Lt. Governor Michelle Strinden – Reentry House Bills](#)
- [HB 1425 – Jonathan Holth, Commissioner of Recovery and Reentry](#)
- [HB 1417 – Jonathan Holth, Commissioner of Recovery and Reentry](#)
- [HB 1549 – Jonathan Holth, Commissioner of Recovery and Reentry](#)
- [Commissioner Jonathan Holth Joins Plain Talk Podcast to Discuss Reentry Legislation](#)

#### Overview of the 2024-2025 Justice Reinvestment Initiative process

- [Justice Reinvestment Reentry Study Work Group Links to Final Report](#)
- [Final Report Summary](#)

#### Engagement Leading to JRI Participation

- [Letter of Interest from State Leadership](#)
- [House Concurrent Resolution 3026 \(2023\)](#)

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