

**SENATE BILL NO. 2349**

Introduced by

Senators Mathern, Erbele, Heitkamp

Representatives Kaldor, Kerzman, Wald

1 A BILL for an Act to provide for an office of faith-based initiatives and an advisory commission  
2 on faith-based initiatives.

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

4 **SECTION 1. Office of faith-based and community initiatives established - Director**  
5 **appointment.** The office of faith-based initiatives is established within the governor's office.  
6 The office of faith-based initiatives has lead responsibility to establish policies, priorities, and  
7 objectives for the state's comprehensive effort to enlist, equip, enable, empower, and expand  
8 the work of faith-based organizations to the extent permitted by law. The governor shall appoint  
9 a director of the office of faith-based initiatives who serves at the pleasure of the governor. The  
10 director may employ one full-time equivalent staff person as may be necessary to carry out this  
11 Act.

12 **SECTION 2. Functions.** The principal functions of the office of faith-based initiatives  
13 are to:

- 14 1. Develop, lead, and coordinate the state's policy agenda affecting faith-based  
15 programs and initiatives; expand the role of those efforts in communities; and  
16 increase their capacity through executive action, legislation, federal and private  
17 funding, and regulatory relief;
- 18 2. Coordinate public education activities designed to mobilize public support for  
19 faith-based initiatives through volunteerism, special projects, demonstration pilots,  
20 and public and private partnerships;
- 21 3. Encourage private charitable giving to support faith-based initiatives;
- 22 4. Bring concerns, ideas, and policy options to the governor and legislative assembly  
23 for assisting, strengthening, and replicating successful faith-based programs;

- 1           5.    Provide policy and legal education to state, local, and community policymakers and
- 2                   public officials seeking ways to empower faith-based organizations and to improve
- 3                   the opportunities, capacity, and expertise of those groups;
- 4           6.    Develop and implement strategic initiatives to strengthen the institutions of civil
- 5                   society and the state's families and communities;
- 6           7.    Encourage innovative grassroots, nonprofit organizations, and civic initiatives; and
- 7           8.    Ensure that the efforts of faith-based organizations meet high standards of
- 8                   excellence and accountability.

9           **SECTION 3. Advisory commission.** The advisory commission on faith-based  
10 initiatives is composed of eleven members to include the following: the executive director of the  
11 department of human services or the director's designee; the labor commissioner or the  
12 commissioner's designee; the attorney general or the attorney general's designee; the director  
13 of the department of corrections and rehabilitation or the director's designee; three members of  
14 the legislative assembly, two of whom must be selected by the members of the legislative  
15 council representing the majority faction and one of whom must be selected by the members of  
16 the legislative council representing the minority faction; and four public members appointed by  
17 the governor. The term of office for the public members is three years, with no more than two  
18 terms expiring in any one year. Of the first public members appointed, one must be appointed  
19 for a term of one year, one must be appointed for a term of two years, and two must be  
20 appointed for terms of three years. No public member may be appointed to more than two  
21 consecutive terms. A chairman of the commission must be chosen annually from the  
22 membership of the commission by a majority of its members at the first meeting of the advisory  
23 commission each year. The advisory commission shall advise the director of the office of  
24 faith-based initiatives and the governor in the establishment of policy regarding matters  
25 affecting the faith-based organizations, including making recommendations to the governor  
26 concerning the future of existing state programs and initiatives. The advisory commission on  
27 faith-based initiatives shall report periodically to the governor and provide the governor with  
28 information and recommendations for the governor's consideration. The public members of the  
29 advisory commission who are not state employees are entitled to be compensated at a rate of  
30 seventy-five dollars per day and are entitled to mileage and expenses as provided by law for  
31 state officers and employees. A state official or employee who is a member of the commission

- 1 must receive that employee's regular salary and is entitled to mileage and expenses, to be paid
- 2 by the employing agency.