

Testimony on HB 1012

2021 Legislative Session

January 26, 2021

Representative Chairman Nelson and Members of the House Human Services Appropriations Committee:

My name is Brian Wallace. I am the grandfather of a young teenage boy who has autism and mental health disabilities. I am the guardian of my grandson; his biological parents were unable to take care of my grandson Loren who is 14 years old.

Loren was unable to access any type of services not even in school until a good friend told me about Family Voices of ND. For the past 2 years Family Voices of ND has supported us with the ability to access programs for Loren which we never knew existed though we searched. I question why so many phone calls ended in dead ends and one call to Family Voices got our family the resources we needed to continue to take care of our grandson. I was not sure what I was going to be able to do to take care of Loren and thank goodness we made that call in time, as foster care looked to be the only option.

Now our family has access to supports and emotional supports to get us through the tough times. Loren is doing so much better in school and enjoys going now. We do things as a family now. I can sleep now.

I do want to mention that one of the vital programs that, Loren accesses is the autism voucher for respite. Loren does not qualify for either Medicaid waivers of Developmental Disability or Autism. He has Asperger's and is too old for the autism wavier. A new amendment for Medicaid, Family Voices of ND has informed us about, does not look promising for our grandson as more than likely will not meet criteria. Family Voices of ND has informed me that this program is in jeopardy. Please do not take the real program that keeps our family together.

I am asking you to make sure that you restore the funding to Family Voices of ND, so that this organization may continue the great work they do for all families, including grandparents. As by testimony, you can see helped our family, stay a family.

Brian Wallace

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