



3111 E Broadway Avenue, Bismarck, North Dakota 58501

Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

My name is Vicki L. Laraway, and I am a Systems Community Advocate with the Dakota Center for Independent living. I am writing in support of the funding for ND Council for Developmental Disabilities. They have helped with grants for our Youth Empowering Social Status Group, (YESS) which is a group formed in 2019 for youth with and without disabilities. Without their support I don't believe that we would have seen the success that we have with this group. The testimonies of these young people are truly amazing as to how this YESS group has changed their lives. They have said that they felt alone, depressed, and like they had no purpose.

The funding that they have through their grant program has allowed us to host a yearly conference for youth called, "Embrace Your Disability". They have been able to pay for taxi rides for our youth to attend our events and our Advisory Board Meetings. They play a very important part of our success.

I am asking again, that you will pass HB 1012.

Thank you.

Vicki L. Laraway