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Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

My name is Vicki L. Laraway and work at the Dakota Center for Independent Living as a Systems Community Advocate. While I wear many hats here, I will tell you that my whole life has trained me to be at this position. I will list a few of the opportunities that I have had the privilege of participating in while working here the past 6 years.

- Helped start a Youth Empowering Social Status Group (YESS) which is a group for youth with and without disabilities. This group goes into the community to educate people first hand what it is like living with a disability. They also volunteer in the community for other non-profits, giving back to their community.
- YESS has helped when I go into the local Senior Centers to teach our elderly how to use their electronic devices.
- We teach disability etiquette to the elementary schools and have joined in with the Morton/Mandan Library in their Bookworm program, reading books online that help young people understand people with disabilities.
- We teach people with disabilities how to get involved in the testimony to local and state governments.
- We teach self-advocacy to people of all ages.
- We teach leadership skills to people of all ages.
- We go into the schools as a surrogate parent for IEP meetings.
- We teach Drivers Education to people of all ages that want to get a drivers permit.
- We help people of all ages to apply for Social Security.

These are just a few things that we do with out consumers. I have heard so many testimonies from people that have reached the goals that they have set for themselves here at DCIL and how very thankful that they are for our agency.

I am asking you to pass HB 1012, so that we can continue to carry on with helping our community of people that need a hand up, be successful in reaching the goals that they set for themselves, and learn to be self-advocates and be independent.

Thank you.

Vicki L Laraway