

Chairman Klein and members of the Finance and Tax Committee. It is my pleasure to stand before you and introduce SB2185. This bill would provide some financial support for Domestic Violence Shelters in the state of North Dakota. These shelters provide an invaluable service to the state and our citizen who find themselves in very traumatic and difficult situations.

In 2019, the state of North Dakota recorded 6,330 incidents of reported Domestic Violence with 4,999 of those individuals being new victims. Women account for 90% of the victims with 164 or 3% of these new victims being pregnant at the time of the abuse. This violence is not limited to one group of individuals but reaches into the homes of many. Victims under the age of 25 account for 24% and 5% is under the age of 18. Other frequent victims are individuals with developmental, physical, and mental health disabilities. The saddest piece of data is that 4,121 children were directly impacted by this violence. Weapons, including knives and guns, were used in 11% of the cases reported and alcohol was present in 30% of the reports.

Currently, there are 19 crisis intervention centers in the state and these centers provide a variety of services depending on the needs in their communities and the financial resources available. The directors of these centers often spend most of their time, writing grants and raising money to support their centers.

In past state budget, these centers have had to split an appropriation of \$750,000 or slightly under \$40,000 per center. The current budget presented by the governor allocates \$2,835,000 or almost \$150,000 per center. Another way to look at it is that it provides almost \$450 worth of services per victim of domestic violence if you don't pay any of the staff or provide a shelter to the victim. North Dakota can do better.

This bill would grant all domestic violence center tax free status which will at the very least take that financial obligation off their plate. Several of the centers currently have that arrangement with their communities but not all and this bill would guarantee that this benefit remain in place into the future.

I stand for any question at this time. Thank you.



Preventing Violence. Promoting Safety. Building Hope.

January 18, 2021

Senator JoNell A. Bakke
North Dakota Senate
67th Assembly Regular Legislative Session
3926 Ivy Drive
Grand Forks, ND 58201-3974

Dear Senator Bakke,

Thank you for introducing Senate Bill No. 2185, which is designed to enact a new subsection to section 57-02-08 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to a property tax exemption for domestic violence shelters; and to provide an effective date.

The Community Violence Intervention Center has been serving clients in Grand Forks County and its surrounding communities for more than 40 years. We are fortunate to receive a property tax exemption for our main building, where many of our shelter victims first arrive for services. This \$12,000 exemption enables us to dedicate vital dollars toward emergency housing, healing and other advocacy services that serve nearly 3,000 victims each year. At CVIC, this savings equates to help for more than 100 people including:

- Crisis intervention for 32 people fleeing violence,
- Advocacy such as protection orders, medical/law enforcement assistance for 32 people,
- Shelter for 27 parents & children, and
- Stability services to help 24 families make a fresh start.

Area nonprofits, who rely heavily on grants and private funding to serve their communities, have faced compounded economic strife following the 2020 pandemic. This property tax exemption would alleviate strain for many nonprofit shelters, which have continued services despite significant impacts to recurring funding sources and increased COVID-related expenses. For victims, the pandemic has escalated basic-need challenges such as gas money, rent and groceries, and increased the severity of the violence they face at home. Your support of this bill will enable shelters who don't qualify for the exemption currently to continue to direct critical safety, healing and education tools to direct service clients fleeing dangerous and sometimes fatal domestic violence situations.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Coiya M. Tompkins".

Coiya M. Tompkins
President/CEO
Community Violence Intervention Center

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