



North Dakota House of Representatives

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Committees:

Agriculture

Judiciary

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Chair Lee and Senate Human Services Committee,

My name is Ruth Buffalo and I represent District 27 in south Fargo. Individuals with behavioral health needs are overrepresented in jails and prisons across the United States. I commend the efforts done thus far to assist individuals after incarceration. HB 1470 as amended seeks to provide for a legislative management study regarding the behavioral health needs of incarcerated individuals.

If passed, this study will consider the behavioral health needs of incarcerated adults, including access, availability, and delivery of services. This study must also include input from stakeholders, including law enforcement, social and clinical service providers, educators, medical providers, mental health advocacy organizations, emergency medical service providers, tribal government, state and local agencies and institutions, and family members.

A constituent recently pointed out the need to receive input from incarcerated adults, this is very important. My hope is we include incarcerated adults' input within this study.

Community-based behavioral health providers play an important role in serving individuals with behavioral health needs and ensuring recovery. Research shows when individuals are provided the necessary services and behavioral health support system, they are more likely to recover. Addressing the behavioral health needs of incarcerated adults can reduce recidivism and encourage recovery.

Please give HB 1470 a Do Pass Recommendation. I will stand for any questions. Thank you.