

Testimony for Senate Bill 2145

Senator Dick Dever

January 18, 2021

Madam Chair, members of the committee, I am Dick Dever, Senator from District 32 here in Bismarck. I was asked by one of the advocates for this bill to provide testimony in support of the bill.

The reality of the coronavirus has demonstrated itself no more prominently than as it has raced through our long-term care facilities. According to yesterday's DOH dashboard, of the 1,384 deaths in North Dakota, 820 have been in those facilities.

While we have gone to great lengths to protect our most vulnerable, those efforts have been frustrated by the virus. The residents have not left the facilities. Their families have not been allowed to visit. As of yesterday, there were 48 residents tested positive and 78 staff members across the state.

It is time that we recognize that no one is more concerned about the health and welfare of the long-term residents than their families. All along, the question in my mind has not been if the families should be able to visit, but how they should.

SB 2145 provides the how. The proper protocols are included to allow for the safety of the residents. Together with rapid testing and the fact that most residents have received the first vaccine, the risk of transmitting the virus is less than other health conditions.

It is time to get back to living. I encourage your favorable consideration of the bill.