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Testimony of Support Senate Bill 2256
Senate Human Services
January 12, 2021

Chairman Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, my name is Kirsten Dvorak. I am the executive director of The Arc of North Dakota, which includes all six Arc chapters in North Dakota: Bismarck, Bowman, Dickinson, Fargo, Grand Forks, and Valley City. Our mission is to improve people's quality of life with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively support their full inclusion and community participation.

I am also a parent of a 21-year-old with autism, Radek, who is non-screenable for the waiver; what services he has received is through the state plan, which he only received for three years as autism services stop at the 21. Because of Radek's autism, he needs help with executive functions such as time management, keeping his living space clean, ensuring that hygiene is done, and doing laundry regularly. He also uses job supports to help him stay on task at his job. Today the ABA therapy he receives is through private pay, which we are fortunate to pay. He is successfully attending ASTEP at Minot State University because of the ABA therapies and the ASTEP program's support, all of which are covered through student loans and private pay.

If he were not at ASTEP, he would be living in my basement because he doesn't qualify for services at this time. To receive those services, he would need to move out of our house, which puts him at risk of being homeless.

So, Chairman Lee, I ask that you pass 2256 to ensure that individuals are appropriately screened for DD services and that they are not falling through the cracks.

In the word of Temple Grandon, it's time to get them out of the basement.

Kristen Dvorak
Executive Director