

SB 2265:

**Hearing of the Senate Human Services Committee, January 26, 2021  
Testimony of Kristi Black, Four Winds High School**

**I strongly support SB 2265, which would** allow unaccompanied homeless youth 14 and older to consent for routine health care, including behavioral health care— but not abortion. In the 2018-2019 school year, North Dakota’s schools served 285 unaccompanied homeless youth. In our state, these youth are more likely to attempt suicide, more likely to abuse prescription medication and methamphetamines, and less likely to see a dentist. They desperately need access to basic health services and behavioral health treatment. Especially during the pandemic, basic medical care is necessary for youth on their own. I assisted an unaccompanied youth who was seeking medical attention for frost bite on her hands but was denied services due to not having a parent or legal guardian to accompany her and consent for her to receive treatment.

Currently, North Dakota law allows youth under age 18 to access only a limited scope of health services: STD and substance abuse treatment, prenatal and pregnancy care, and emergency care. Unaccompanied homeless minors cannot access basic health care (including physicals and dental care), or behavioral health care, without parental consent. These restrictions put youth at risk for serious health consequences, and even death. SB 2265 would remove these barriers, in a narrowly focused way that will only impact the small but very vulnerable population of unaccompanied homeless youth in North Dakota. I support SB 2265 in an effort to help those students who will continue to be denied the very basic needs of health and behavior health care.

I ask you to vote in favor of SB 2265. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at [Kristi.black@k12.nd.us](mailto:Kristi.black@k12.nd.us) or 766-1400 ext. 1474.