



**CHRISTIAN ADOPTION
SERVICES**
EST. 1985

**Testimony of Jean Nasers
Interim Director of Christian Adoption Services**

Before the North Dakota Senate Committee on Human Services on SB 2230

**SUPPORT
January 23, 2023**

Thank you, Ms. Chairperson, and members of the Committee for providing the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 2230. My name is Jean Nasers, and I am the interim director for Christian Adoption Services.

I am a wife and the biological mother of three children. One night my youngest son woke up in the middle of the night because of teething. As I held him close, my eyes filled with tears as I thought of all the moms that long to hold a baby in their arms. The next morning, my daughter and I giggled over a shared inside joke. A tinge of sorrow struck my heart as I thought of the silence so many parents experience during breakfast. That same day, I watched my husband play catch with our oldest son. I thought of all the amazing dads that would love to share one of these moments.

I share this with you because for the last four years I have walked with numerous families as they go through the adoption process. I speak with anywhere between 5-10 families in North Dakota a month interested in growing their family through domestic adoption. The desire of all of their hearts is the same: to provide for and love a child(ren), to be a family. The majority of families that seek to grow their family through adoption have been impacted by infertility and have already had a long, draining journey. They have gone through a good deal of emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical hardship in the hope of growing their family. Not all but many have spent a considerable amount of time and money on fertility treatments and/or surgery just for a chance to have a child. After thinking for a considerable amount of time, a family will decide that adoption is the best (and likely only) option for them to pursue to become parents, so they reach out to an adoption agency.

In North Dakota, the cost to for domestic infant adoption is approximately \$25,000 from beginning to end. These costs typically cover application, orientation, home study, expectant parenting counseling, placement costs, and all the travel required to successfully complete an adoptive placement. Many families have to resort to taking out a personal loan in order to cover the costs associated with adoption because payment plans are not an option because services are provided immediately. Some of the costs associated with the adoption process vary from case to case; however, every adoptive family must complete a home study in order to adopt. The cost for a home study is approximately \$4,000. The home study cost is a small portion of the entire cost of an adoption, but the home study is the most important and essential part of the adoption process because it is the part of the process that determines if a family is safe and healthy to adoption a child.

Currently, there is minimal assistance to help cover the cost of adoption for families. The time has arrived for North Dakota to provide support to these families by helping cover the cost of home studies. The funding provided by this bill would allow us to support families up front in the adoption process. If honored with the full amount of funds requested, my agency would use the funds completely for home studies and to offset the cost of adoption for adoptive families in North Dakota.

Please support Senate Bill 2230 so we can increase the support provided to adoptive families throughout North Dakota. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Sincerely,

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