

House Finance and Taxation Public Hearing Committee
March 11th, 2025 HB 2281
Testimony in Support

Dear Chair Headland and Members of the House Finance and Taxation Committee,

I urge a “Do Pass” on HB 2281.

Had I known the bill was a way to help fund our 988 services, I would have submitted testimony when it was heard in the Senate. However, since I am a chamber late to this hearing, I am graced with the perspective of many people across our state and nationally for why they would or wouldn't like this.

It seems like a simple problem and a matter of cost. How comfortable is North Dakota in continuing to subsidize the life of our youth for the profits of tobacco? According to YRBS data found in the [State of the State Report](#), 17.5% of our youth consider suicide. And looking at smoking, we see 8.9% of youth have tried by middle school. By highschool it goes up to 20%.

Keep in mind that while these numbers are thankfully far from a majority, our total student population measures over 100,000 kids. These numbers represent tens of thousands of our youth. And while those are for just suicide ideation and smoking once, there are students who do attempt suicide or chronically smoke and they too measure in the thousands.

Our kids need help. They desperately need help. I don't know how long I can say this. I don't know who I need to talk to about this. I have been trying for so long to make any headway anywhere. And if nothing else, this bill does feel like a move in the right direction. Please give it a “do pass”.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our state,
Faye Seidler