

Senate bill 2033

Chairman Ruby and members of the House Human Service Committee,

My name is Bob Flath and I am a County Commissioner with LaMoure County, ND.

I also serve as a volunteer firefighter and EMR.

and serve as Chair for the LaMoure County Emergency Planning Committee and have the support of all member of that committee and speak for them as well.

We all stand in opposition to SB 2033

I have taken a deep dive into written and video testimony of these two bills involving ambulance services and found some very interesting things. SB 2033 concerning distressed ambulance services seeks to add an FTE and more than \$200,000 for ambulance regulation/enforcement of this new law. It troubles me that statements made during the final discussion in committee just prior to moving the bill to appropriations that the chairperson admitted to not having any constituents (city, county, ambulance services, Emergency Management, NDACO, League of Cities, etc) involved during interim discussions and took advice solely from the ND EMS Association. The chairperson stated that she believed the local services/constituents had their opportunity to discuss these issues with EMS Association representatives PJ Ringdahl and Adam Parker. You can confirm these statements by listening to video discussion on SB 2033 at 10:50:35am on January 8th. I can guarantee that there are city and county officials that don't even know this Association exists. Both of these individuals potentially stand to gain from distressed or failing ambulance services.

Upon doing some research into the EMS Association I have come to find that the make up of this association is mainly larger and private service providers. I know of only two small service representatives that belong. Also, I find that Adam Parker, the chairman of the Associations Advocacy Committee who testified in support of SB 2033 is also Adam Parker, owner of Gold Star Solutions LLC, a consulting firm specializing in assisting rural ambulance services to find solutions to financial and operational issues. It dawned on me at this point that I had met Adam before during an ambulance meeting I attended as a LaMoure County Commissioner trying to find ways for our LaMoure Ambulance service to continue. This meeting took place some time ago but I do remember one of Adam's solutions was to give his consulting firm \$200,000 annually and his firm would step in and find our solution. Funny how a consultant that makes money from failing ambulance services is advising our state on how to enforce new laws for our ambulance services. I also remember the first move required of our ambulance service would require becoming a District so that we could raise the funds to pay for these services. There are options other than District formation to raise funds and curb the requirement for another large board, or in LaMoure Counties case 3 individual Ambulance District Boards, in communities that struggle to find members for existing boards. I would like to go into more detail as to how this could be done but have some fear that a new rule could easily be created in the next interim to possibly close those doors. I believe there is another bill here that would allow Districts to place consultants on their boards and pay them?! I am sure you could find a consultant willing to sit on all these boards and collect pay from each one.

I would also like to have someone explain what the costs are going to be? The bill just states that a consultant could be hired to come in and fix your service and later in the bill NDHHS is allowed to bill the service or political subdivision whatever the costs are. Is this consultant going to work for \$50/hr, \$100/hr, \$500/hr??? and how many hours are we thinking??? I have been informed that a consulting firm that provides services in ND has travelling EMT's available at \$68/hr. So that can also be added to the bill???

If the state is looking to spend \$200,000 on another FTE why not make this individual a state employee and have them help with advisement and assistance rather than just enforcing rules and forwarding these distressed services to a consultant who will likely advise them to pursue increasing property taxes. I will be the first to admit that added property taxes may be a necessity but do not believe that my constituents wish to pay increased costs for consultants. If money is the only factor being considered in the "fix" to our problem, why would we want to add consulting fees to everything we do?

Thank you for your time in hearing my concerns,

Bob Flath

LaMoure County Commissioner

(701)320-0194

Members of the LaMoure Emergency Planning Committee who stand with me in Opposition of SB 2033:

Grant Mathern, Edgeley Fire

Paul Ostendorf, Edgeley Industry

Jessica Duffy LaMoure County Public Health

Kimberly Robbins LaMoure County Emergency Manager

Art Hagebock Print Media

Sheriff Bob Fernandes

Doug Hintzman Kulm Ambulance

Janice Shannon Edgeley Ambulance Service

Alan Nitschke Jud Fire