



Senate Human Services Committee
Testimony In Opposition to House Bill #1095
3-10-25

Madame Chair, members of the Senate Human Services committee, my name is Greg Kasowski, Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Centers of North Dakota.

We are in opposition to House Bill 1095, specifically section 3c on lines 16-17 which states that "A child protective services liaison shall assist child protective services with a student case investigation as allowed by law."

Our concern is that individuals within the school system who do not have the training to interact with a child after a disclosure of sexual or physical abuse, nor the skills to conduct a forensic interview with a child, may be interviewing children. If untrained and inexperienced individuals conduct interviews, it could interfere with the law enforcement investigation and child protective services assessment processes, taint the forensic interview process, jeopardize the pursuit of criminal justice, and ultimately harm the child.

Although forensic interviews are not required by law, research has shown that the best outcomes for children who are the victims of abuse happen when forensic interviews are conducted by highly trained forensic interviewers at a Children's Advocacy Center.

Before Children's Advocacy Centers existed, children would have to relay their experience of abuse multiple times—from the initial disclosure to a trusted adult, to interviews from law enforcement, human services personnel, doctors/nurses, prosecutors, and mental health clinicians. The repetition of the disclosure by the child not only caused further trauma to the child, but often caused the child's account to become tainted by interviewers who were not trained to facilitate the disclosure.

When it comes to forensic interviews, North Dakota's Children's Advocacy Centers follow rigorous accreditation standards from the National Children's Alliance. This includes, but is not limited to:

Children's Advocacy Centers of North Dakota

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**CHILDREN'S
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- Coordinated support of a multidisciplinary team on the case, which may include law enforcement, human services, medical professionals, family advocates, mental health clinicians, and prosecutors
- Real-time observation of the forensic interview by members of the multidisciplinary team
- Forensic interviews being conducted in a child-friendly, neutral setting
- Written policies and procedures that ensure separation of the victim and alleged adult offender during the investigative process
- And for the forensic interviewers:
 - 32 hours of training in the foundational concepts of an evidence-supported forensic interviewing protocol
 - Ongoing education for a minimum of eight hours every two years
 - Structured peer review at least two times per year

Madame Chair, members of the committee, we would recommend a DO NOT PASS on House Bill 1095. I will stand for any questions.

Sincerely,

Greg Kasowski
Executive Director

