



NDSBA
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HB 1562
Testimony of Amy De Kok
Senate Human Services Committee
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Chair Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, my name is Amy De Kok, and I am the Executive Director for the North Dakota School Boards Association (NDSBA). NDSBA represents all 168 public school districts and their governing boards. I am here in support of HB 1562, and to advocate for the proposed amendments to the training requirements for mandated reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect.

During the last legislative session, the Legislature enacted a requirement that all public and nonpublic school teachers, administrators, and counselors complete an online interactive training module provided by the ND Department of Health and Human Services and submit documentation of its completion annually. While well-intentioned, the implementation of this requirement has presented several challenges that HB 1562 seeks to address.

The current mandated training module, which lasts over three hours, has proven to be burdensome for educators who already balance numerous professional development requirements and instructional responsibilities. Additionally, for some educators who have personally experienced childhood trauma, this training can be particularly difficult to complete in a structured online setting without flexibility in delivery methods.

HB 1562 offers a practical solution by allowing schools, colleges, and regional education associations the ability to provide mandated reporter training that satisfies the requirements for subsequent training at the district level. This change does not diminish the importance of ensuring educators are adequately trained to recognize and report suspected child abuse or neglect. Rather, it enhances accessibility and accommodates the diverse needs of educators while maintaining the integrity of the training content.

By providing school districts with more flexibility in how the training is delivered, we can ensure that mandated reporters receive high-quality, evidence-based training in a manner that is more efficient and less distressing for those with past trauma experiences. Furthermore, allowing schools and regional

education associations to facilitate training will better integrate mandated reporter education into existing professional development frameworks, making compliance more feasible for all involved.

I urge the Committee to support HB 1562 and help refine this important training requirement in a way that benefits both educators and the students they serve. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.