



Testimony Prepared for
March 12, 2025

Senate Human Service Committee

By: Rhonda Allery, Mountain Lakes Human Service Zone Director

RE: HB 1564: Relating to Indian Child Welfare

Chair Lee, Vice Chair Weston, and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, my name is Rhonda Allery. I serve as the Director of Mountain Lakes Human Service Zone, which includes the counties of Rolette, Benson, Ramsey and Towner. In addition, I am a member of the North Dakota Human Service Zone Director Association. I am here today to provide testimony in support of HB 1564.

Human Service Zones are the legal designee of the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS), managing a range of critical responsibilities including the legal custody of children in the public foster care system, foster care case management services, and the assessment of child safety (child protective services). Zone staff also provide in-home services to families to ensure the safety of children in their homes.

This bill supports the application of the federal law the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1974. It helps Zone child welfare team members meet safety needs and defines best practice for Native American children who are impacted by abuse or neglect and the foster care system.

We believe HB 1564 aligns with current practice, policy, and the Safety Framework Practice Model (SFPM), adopted in 2020 as part of social services redesign (SB 2124). This model ensures consistent, evidence-based practices across all Human Service Zones, focusing on child safety while respecting parental rights.

I urge a “do pass” on HB 1564. Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. I stand for any questions from the committee.