

**Testimony
House Bill 1391
Senate Industry and Business
Tuesday March 18, 2025
Rolette County Public Health District**

Good morning, Chairman Barta and members of the Senate Industry and Business Committee.

My name is Barbara Frydenlund, I am a Registered Nurse and the administrator of Rolette County Public Health. Rolette County Public Health District serves Rolette County located in District 9.

I am here today in opposition to HB 1391.

I am very concerned about how this legislation would limit businesses' ability to protect their employees, customers, and financial stability from vaccine-preventable diseases.

As a public health administrator, I am responsible for ensuring a healthy and capable public health workforce, a workforce that is ready to respond to the public health needs of the community. Limiting vaccine documentation requirements could undermine this readiness by increasing the risk of preventable diseases, thereby potentially compromising the effectiveness and preparedness of the public health workforce. Our public health mission can be interpreted to implementing, reasonable measures to protect the health, safety and welfare of our community.

At no point would I want to be responsible for an employee contracting vaccine preventable disease from a fellow employee or for an employee spreading a vaccine preventable disease to a client/patient. Either of these scenarios would increase the distrust of healthcare providers, send a message to the public that we have

careless employee policy. This could also create friction and potentially create a segregated workplace environment. Please keep in mind that there are individuals that are unable to be vaccinated due to age, being medically fragile or medically incompatible with vaccines, such as a severe allergy or pregnancy. North Dakota has extremely liberal vaccine exemptions and may be abused in some situations.

The unintended consequence of this legislature could be that North Dakota is discriminating against and placing greater health risks to the individuals too young to be vaccinated, the medically fragile and the those with a true incompatibility with a vaccine such as allergies and pregnancy.

Please consider the circumstance of a nurse, unvaccinated for a serious vaccine preventable disease, and working with immunocompromised cancer patients. He/she could have the ability to wipe out his/her entire patient assignment by spreading this disease to medically vulnerable individuals. I can't imagine the uproar from the family and community if such a catastrophic event occurred. Not to mention the litigation to follow.

As a nurse, I am concerned about any legislation that could prevent educational institutions from enforcing necessary vaccine documentation requirements, potentially undermining decades of successful school immunization programs and increasing the risk of preventable diseases in school settings.

As I read through this legislation, I am plagued with the concept that this could be interpreted as another weapon in the anti-vaccination arsenal in attempt to undermine employer and institutional vaccine requirements. Such efforts ultimately pose a threat to state, national and global public health. Today we live in a state that is relatively free of vaccine preventable disease, the same diseases

that historically killed many of our ancestors....I do not want to experience this dreadful repeat of history.

An infectious disease instructor once told my college class that “if one individual can excuse themselves, so could too many others—and the result could endanger the entire community, province or nation”. This was simply a reference to “herd immunity” or lack thereof.

I ask you to please vote Do Not Pass on HB 1391.

I stand for questions.

Thank you,

Barbara Frydenlund, RN

Rolette County Public Health