

Testimony for Senate Bill 2086

House Human Services Committee

March 15, 2021

Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Steven Reiser, Director of Dakota Central Human Service Zone. I am also a member of the North Dakota Human Service Zone Association. Please accept this testimony in favor of SB 2086.

When SB 2124 passed the last legislative session, what was county social services where in for big changes. Human service zones were formed in January of 2020 and have been operating for one year. Human service zone directors started their duties in April. I think everyone knew that changes this big were going to take some time and that review of the statute would be necessary. SB 2086 is the start of that review process. To assist in making the changes necessary a workgroup of Senators, Department of Human Services staff, Human Service Zone Directors and North Dakota Association of Counties staff was formed and amendments were made to the Senate bill.

I would like to touch on three studies that were included in these amendments.

The bill directs the Department of Human Services, Human Service Zone and the North Dakota Association of Counties to study indirect costs. This study's purpose is to make the indirect payments more equitable between counties.

Another study to be conducted by the Department of Human Services, Human Service Zone and the North Dakota Association of Counties is to address the process of allowing zone employees to transfer to state employment. This process study is to examine all the consequences to all parties if these transfers were to occur.

The last study is a Legislative Management Study of total compensation for Human Services and Human Service Zone employees. This is to be a comprehensive study of compensation to attempt to achieve equity between all human services employees.

Thank you for accepting my testimony and I would try to answer any questions you may have.