TESTIMONY
Senate Appropriations Committee
SB 2169
January 21, 2021
Senator Kathy Hogan

Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, my name is Kathy Hogan, and I represent District 21 the heart of Fargo.

SB 2169 is a bill in response to the 2020 CARES ACT funding. As I monitored the spending process over the last year, I became concerned about the lack of legislative involvement and transparency in developing the spending of over 1 billion dollars. I recognize that the Emergency Commission and Budget section gave approval to the recommendations from the Executive branch, but these were reactive actions rather than pro-active initiatives. The Legislative branch of government is responsible to approval of budget and what happened last year hopefully never happens again.

This bill does three things. First it recognizes our many citizens who provided essential services during the COVID crisis from in-home care workers, grocery store clerks, public employees and delivery drivers. The North Dakota work ethic and sense of community were so evident. Secondly, it provides a broad and direct economic stimulus because it is focus directly on working individuals who, if they receive a stimulus payment, are most likely to directly spend or use that money. Finally, it establishes that we as the legislature need to be involved in these critical budget decisions.

This bill is contingent on additional flexible federal funding for COVID relief. I have prepared amendments to lower the stimulus payment and eliminate section 3 which will eliminate any need for ND general funds in the 2021-2023 budget.

One of the most successful COVID response funding initiatives was the MEAP program which was implement in late November and early December. That program was well utilized to assist health care workers with COVID related expenses. The Legislative Body needs to take back its budgeting authority and this is one way we can do it.

Thank you, Chairman Holmberg I would be more than willing to answer any questions.