

Testimony for Senate Bill 2088

Senate Human Services Committee

January 6, 2021

Chairman Lee and members of the Senate 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 2088.

Human Service Zones have been assisting the Department of Human Services in administrating the subsidized adoption program for North Dakota. Zones have accepted applications, negotiated the amount of the subsidies and have completed the necessary reviews for subsidized adoptions.

I support the changes proposed for how payments should be made. I also agree with the additions made on page two lines 5 and 6 of this bill. In the rare occasions where an adoption has disrupted, a foster placement made, and the adoptive parents are not interested in having the child return to their home payments have been a question. Prior to the change in this bill the subsidized adoption payments could only stop if the adoptive parents agreed to that change. When the parents did not agree to have the payments stopped this resulted in payments going out to adoptive parents who were not supporting the child and payments being made for the child's foster care placement. With this change the duplication of payments will stop. This situation occurs more than one would think. Dakota Central is a small zone and we have had this situation occur at least a couple of times.

Thank you for this opportunity to share this testimony with you and I am willing to answer any questions you might have.