

Kristine Medeiros
329 3rd St NW
Watford City, ND 58854
701-770-1296

RE: SB2145

Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing this opportunity to submit my testimony in support of SB 2145.

My name is Kristine Medeiros. I am a mother and grandmother from Watford City, ND. I work as an administrative assistant for our county Emergency Manager.

Almost 8 years ago my oldest son was in a really bad car accident. He suffered a TBI as a result of his injuries sustained in that car accident. He is partially paralyzed on his left side, has little vision, and it has affected his speech. For a while we were able to keep him in his home with his brother taking care of him. Then he moved in with his sister and she became his caretaker. After a few years, we made the agonizing decision that maybe placing him a facility would be the best option. There he would get good healthy meals, be able to socialize, get the therapy he so desperately needs and be close to other family and friends.

Three weeks after we moved him in, Covid-19 hit. The emergency declaration was made the day before my son's 7th anniversary of his accident, One week before his 32nd birthday. Needless to say, we didn't get to celebrate his birthday with him. We got to wish him happy birthday through a window.

My youngest daughter was looking forward to going down to see him and watch wrestling with him like they used to do before the accident. And now she can't. (Emotional support) He was supposed to get physical therapy. And now he's getting limited exercises and he is regressing. (physical support) My son goes to chapel just for the sake of socializing, but he's not Christian. He's Asatru. So his spiritual needs are not being met because his Gothi can't visit him.

My son is not the only family member that is in a facility. My great-aunt is living in the same facility as my son. Her 93rd birthday was in November. And we didn't get to celebrate with her. In fact, the last time we got to see her was at my father's funeral the end of August. She is hard of hearing, so having to wear masks has been very hard on her. Video chatting doesn't work, because she can't hear. She needs to be close to you to see, and she can read lips. But the staff doesn't know that. And they don't ask.

I used to "pop" in to check on how my son was doing, visit with him, help with some exercises then go visit with my great-aunt. Until my father's funeral, I haven't seen my great-aunt since March. And I haven't been able to visit with her since.

This is only a small step to curb a much bigger issue. A step I am willing to take if it means I can see my son and my great-aunt again and be an active part of their daily lives.

Again, thank you for giving me this opportunity to tell a little bit of our story and to give testimony in support of this bill.