

Dear Senator, Roers,

I am writing today in support of SB 2198, which would lay our framework to help some of our staffing shortages and staffing crises in North Dakota. This is the North Dakota State Nurse Staffing Clearinghouse

My name is Tessa Johnson, and I am a registered nurse in North Dakota. I am the Executive Director of CountryHouse residence in Dickinson North Dakota. CountryHouse Residence is licensed as a basic care and memory care home. I also serve as the ND Center for Nursing as well as the NDNA President.

In many areas in nursing and healthcare around the state, we have faced staffing shortages at one point in time. During the last year during the COVID-19 crisis many of us had faced staffing crisis and staffing shortages like no other. I am an administrator of a long-term care facility and with staff members out with COVID-19 it was very difficult to staff our building at times.

Prior to COVID-19 we were often able to use local staffing agencies to fill needs. During this time, the demand is so high that even our local staffing agencies had a hard time helping us fill some of our shifts. There are many times or administrators, or leadership teams had to work in caregiver situations putting our work behind to the back burner for our residents to get the care we need. All these situations lead to burn out, exhaustion and leaving the practice.

There have also been times in which we have used agency that enjoy working for our company and with our residents. To keep them we must pay a large amount of money to buy their contract out which is very difficult for small facilities. This clearinghouse would give us the opportunity to help match these health care workers with a job they love.

As a nursing home administrator, I am speaking in favor of this staffing clearinghouse to help us mitigate this staffing crisis is in staffing shortages. We would be able to have help filling certified nursing assistant roles, nursing roles and other jobs in our buildings. We also would have to pay less recruitment fees and out-of-state contracts.

In addition, I feel like integrating the North Dakota nursing graduates into this program would help keep new graduate nurses in our state which is always a goal of ours.

If facilities are going to pay a higher amount for staffing through agency staff it would make more sense to keep the money in our state and keep it locally to benefit the nurses and other healthcare entities throughout our state.

I thank you for your consideration.

Warm Regards,

Tessa Johnson, MSN, BSN, RN CDP

Executive Director CountryHouse Residence

President, NDNA

President, ND Center for Nursing

tjohnson@countryhouse.net