

Chairman Owens and Members of the Education Committee.

My name is Christy Dodd and I am the Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota. I am here today to speak on behalf of a do pass for HB 1144. Our Mission here at Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota is to empower families to thrive by providing community driven resources that foster safe and nurturing environments for children. When I first graduated from college I worked in a daycare starting out in the toddler room, moved to running the office and discipline and then ultimately became the lead teacher for the preschool classes. I was super young but loved children and felt completely responsible for making sure that the 27 kids in my classroom were ready for kindergarten. I spent 10 hours a day with them facilitating fun hands-on learning so they could tie their shoes, write their names, know their colors, numbers and letters, sit in groups, and go on field trips. I felt the weight of ensuring they were ready for school and safe while in my care but I had no idea that I was a mandated reporter or even how to go about sharing any concerns that I had for a child. After I left the daycare, I ran a child advocacy center in Colorado for 10 years. One of my first jobs was to implement a handbook for our county for mandated reporters walking them through how to make a report of child abuse and educating them about what happened after they made the call. After that each year we went into schools and daycares in our county and provided them with Mandated reporter training because we knew that turnover was high and people forget things especially if it is a training that happens right after you are hired and then you don't get retrained again until you change jobs. One and done training is quickly forgotten you can just ask my son when for the 20th time I've asked him to show me how to shut off closed caption on our TV if it accidentally gets turned on.

Here in ND we have some great resources around Child Abuse Prevention. One of those is a website where mandated reporters can go through training for free in less than one hour. This bill will require them to go through this training once a year so it doesn't get stored way back in our memories. It refreshes their memories and reminds them of not only the mandate they have to report but how to make a report. Our teachers and daycare providers spend hours a day with our children and anyone who is a parent or has spent time with a child knows that they share things whenever they think about it. This training will equip our teachers and daycare providers with the resources and tools to be able to make a report of child abuse and share their concerns to protect the children they are working with and it keeps it in their minds that they are required to do so. Again I am asking you to recommend this as a do pass.

I can now take any questions that the Committee might have.