

HB 1035 Testimony
House Human Services

01/04/2023

Representative Chairman Weiz, Vice Chairman Representative Ruby and Members of the House Human Services Committee.

My name is Vicki Peterson and I am a Family Consultant for Family Voices of ND, the Family-to-Family Health Information Network in ND, a non-profit that works with families whom have children and youth with special health care needs, chronic health conditions and disabilities. We also work with self-advocates and professionals. I am also a parent of a young adult with Autism and Intellectual Disability along with chronic health conditions and a former parent representative of the ND Autism Task Force.

I am here today to provide testimony in favor of the creation of a cross-disability advisory council and to repeal the ND Autism Spectrum Disorder Task Force.

The study conducted by Alvarez and Marsal, action taken on SB 2256, proposed a recommendation to create a cross-disability advisory council. A cross-disability advisory council would lead to more participation that would represent the needs and challenges of many and not a specific disability. For all those whom have disabilities and challenges to bring their unique perspectives and join as one advisory council would lead to a greater voice that is needed to identify and prioritize policy issues as it relates to accessibility, inclusive and equity for persons with disabilities. A cross-disability advisory council would better address gaps in services and programs and to educate the Department of Health and Human Services and the community.

As a parent who sat on a very specific task force and as a professional working with families who have children with many different disabilities, the needs do cross-over and are not very specific to the name given to the

disability. Implementation of a neutral facilitator will enhance a councils' meeting process so that everyone has the ability to contribute without influence from any one certain agency and increase the productivity of accomplishments to be achieved.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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