



CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS OF NORTH DAKOTA

House Human Services – March 1, 2023
Testimony In Support of Senate Bill 2051

Chairman Weisz, members of the Committee,

My name is Greg Kasowski, and I am the executive director of the Children's Advocacy Centers of North Dakota. I appear today in support of SB 2051, specifically section 9.

For those unfamiliar with Children's Advocacy Centers, we provide direct services to victims of child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, and other forms of child maltreatment. Before Children's Advocacy Centers existed, children would have to retell their experience of traumatic abuse an average of 10 to 12 times—to law enforcement, then to a human services worker, then to medical personnel, then to a prosecutor, and on and on it went.

But now, with Children's Advocacy Centers, children only need tell of their traumatic experience once, in a child-friendly environment, and with a trained expert forensic interviewer. Our CACs have become the centralized hub for child abuse cases, where our partners in law enforcement, human services, prosecution, medical personnel, mental health, and victim advocacy all coordinate together in one place to help victims of child abuse. We serve every city and county in the state through nine locations—Williston, Watford City, Dickinson, Minot, Bismarck, Bottineau, Standing Rock, Fargo, Grand Forks, and soon Jamestown.

Children's Advocacy Centers also provide many other services—such as mental health therapy, victim advocacy and medical exams—to help children and families in their journey toward healing.

The proposed changes in section 9 are fourfold:

1. **Allows board members of CACs to receive fingerprint background checks.** Our CACs have always conducted background checks on board members, but some of our funding and accreditation agencies now require *fingerprint* background checks for board members. It is true that board members typically don't work directly with children, but it is a good practice to make sure they pass those critical checks because they're the face of child safety in our communities.
2. **Clarifies that the checks are for board members/employees/final applicants of CACs even if they do not have contact with a child.** Like board members, some CAC employees (e.g., accountants) or final applicants may not work directly

Children's Advocacy Centers of North Dakota

www.CACND.org

director@cacnd.org

701.301.3701





**CHILDREN'S
ADVOCACY
CENTERS**
OF NORTH DAKOTA

with children. This change differentiates this group from contractors/volunteers who are only fingerprint background checked if they have contact with a child.

3. **Removes multidisciplinary team member.** This was in response to the FBI's request, as the term could include law enforcement, human services, or our other partners who already typically receive fingerprint background checks through their own agencies.
4. **Defines board member.** The Bureau of Criminal Investigation identified that the FBI would likely require this definition.

Mister Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing the opportunity to testify before you today, and I would be happy to try and answer any questions.

Children's Advocacy Centers of North Dakota

www.CACND.org

director@cacnd.org

701.301.3701

