

March 14, 2023

North Dakota House Human Services Committee

My name is Tim Mathern. I serve on the Senate Appropriations Committee and am also a social worker. I am here to ask you to give a favorable recommendation to SB 2071. It requires the Department of Health and Human Services to seek approval from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to expand medical assistance coverage for pregnant women with income between 162% and 185% of the federal poverty level. The Department estimates that SB 2071 would expand coverage to 407 clients.

I began my career in 1972 working with young unmarried women experiencing unplanned pregnancies. I recall the tears shed when the pregnancy was confirmed and the challenges of telling the parents and the new expectant father. The questions to be addressed included agonizing decisions about adoption, abortion, or being a single parent.

A major issue then and still today is that of related health care costs. A challenge often was not only the amount but also the responsible person for these expenses. The passage of this bill gives women resources reducing pressure from other people.

This bill is an important step to address our public policies regarding maternity health care. Particularly since the recent US Supreme Court decision directing abortion policy to the states, the passage of this bill would help women and families make a decision supporting an ongoing pregnancy.

I ask you for a Do Pass recommendation on this bill.

Thank you.

Senator Tim Mathern