

Chair Weisz, members of the committee, my name is Carl Young. I am the Executive Director of FASD-ND. FASD stands for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. We help support families of children born substance exposed to drugs or alcohol. My lobbyist ID is 136.

We stand neutral on this bill. Approximately 1 in 20 children are born substance exposed to drugs or alcohol. Of those, the vast majority are undiagnosed. Our agency struggles with getting schools to fully recognize FASD as a developmental disability that requires on going support in the schools and communities. Our schoolteachers struggle daily with "behavioral children". At FASD-ND we choose to see those behaviors as symptoms. Symptoms of possibly undiagnosed neurodivergent disabilities caused by exposure to drugs or alcohol in the womb.

With this bill we have a couple of questions. Will the non-identifiable data from the reports that this bill is sure to generate be made publicly available? This legislation may very well afford the opportunity to get a full grasp on the extent of the use of non-medicinal substances while pregnant. For those children born substance exposed, where do they turn for services to get the help that they need to live in their home community with the support that they will need?

A word of caution regarding unintended consequences. It is our belief that this legislation has the potential to expose a significant issue in our state. At some point that issue will need to be directly addressed with supports and funding that currently does not exist.

My son is 21 years old. I can tell you firsthand that the school to prison pipeline is an unmitigated success. He was born in 2001. One of the first meth babies born in the state. We struggled his whole life with getting him the support he needed to live in the community without being institutionalized. Currently he is in the Cass County Jail serving 120 days for theft of an automobile. The damage caused by the ingestion of drugs during pregnancy eliminated most of his deductive reasoning, and executive function skills. He doesn't understand cause and effect. While he knows he is in jail for stealing a car, it has little impact on his connection to the actual event.

I'll stand for any questions that you may have.