



House Human Services SB 2276 January 24th, 2023

Rep. Weisz and committee members. I am Kirsten Dvorak, Executive Director of The Arc of North Dakota; we have six chapters throughout the state of North Dakota that advocate on behalf of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) for full inclusion in their community of choice.

We support SB 2276

Family caregivers of individuals with IDD play an invaluable role in providing the necessary care and support that their loved one needs. Unfortunately, with the changing demographics, such as a lack of workforce, family caregivers often need to meet increasing demands on their time and resources. We must recognize the tremendous dedication of these family caregivers and provide them with the necessary resources and support they need to ensure that individuals with IDD can receive the highest quality of care.

Position:

- Strengthen the caregiving efforts of families, with particular emphasis on their emotional and physical health, financial and material needs, and parenting and family interaction.
- Enable families to make informed choices regarding the nature of community supports for themselves and their members with disabilities.
- Help families with minor members stay intact, preventing out-of-home placements for a minor child, particularly in institutions or congregate settings.
- Ensure aging caregivers can care for their loved one as long as necessary and appropriate while honoring self-determination.

At The Arc of North Dakota, we understand the importance of providing lifelong care for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. We also recognize that not all families have the resources to provide lifelong care and that paying families as caregivers should not be used as a substitute. We are committed to advocating for policies that support families through financial assistance, home-based services, and respite care so that they can continue to provide quality caregiving for their loved ones. We believe that it is essential for families to be supported to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive the best possible care.

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