

## House Human Services Committee

Senate Bill 2276 – March 8, 2023

### Testimony of Daniel Gulya, Attorney, Protection and Advocacy

Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee:

My name is Dan Gulya; I am an attorney with the North Dakota Protection & Advocacy Project (P&A). P&A protects the human, civil and legal rights of people with disabilities. The agency's programs and services seek to make positive changes for people with disabilities where we live, learn, work and play.

P&A supports this effort to create a path for household members- parents, siblings, children - to be paid service providers to meet the extraordinary care needs of their family members. This bill supports person-centered home- and community-based services, so that families can ensure the essential level of care their loved one needs.

If these families were to make the gut-wrenching decision to not care for their loved ones at home, it would have a significant fiscal impact on the state. The average cost of care for these individuals in an intermediate care facility is \$175,000 per year; home based services are about half as expensive.<sup>i</sup> Helping these North Dakotans care for their loved ones at home is the fiscally responsible choice.

Many of these families come to you after being told by the Department that they are authorized for more hours of service than providers can supply; some come to you after deciding that they are the best help for their loved ones. You can help them and make a prudent fiscal choice for North Dakota at the same time. I respectfully request support for SB 2276. Thank you, and I would be glad to answer any questions.

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<sup>i</sup> These numbers are from page 75 and 76 of the Alvarez and Marsal study presented to the 21-23 Interim Human Services Committee.

[https://ndlegis.gov/files/committees/67-2021/23\\_5168\\_03000\\_appendixf.pdf](https://ndlegis.gov/files/committees/67-2021/23_5168_03000_appendixf.pdf)