

Testimony Prepared for the
House Human Services Committee

March 22, 2023

By: Kim Jacobson, Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone Director

RE: Senate Bill 2291 – TANF Study

Chair Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee, my name is Kim Jacobson. I am the Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone Director, which includes the service area of Traill and Steele Counties. In addition, I serve as President of the North Dakota Human Service Zone Director Association. Please consider my testimony in support of SB 2291.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is an economic assistance program administered by human service zones. This program assists the lowest income and most economically fragile families with young children. TANF was first introduced in North Dakota in 1997, which is over twenty-five years ago. Funding largely comes from federal block grant dollars and have been flexible in nature.

To my understanding, TANF block grant funds have been utilized in North Dakota to fund numerous of non-TANF related activities. This is concerning to me. My concern centers around the utilization of TANF-funds and if we are adequately investing TANF funds to our best ability and intent. It has been a long time since the North Dakota legislature has studied TANF. To do so, would bring information and insight to the legislative body that can be used for future decisions regarding this important program. Please consider passage of SB 2291.

Thank you for consideration of my testimony. I stand for questions from the committee.