



NORTH DAKOTA

Family Alliance LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 2327

Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director
North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action
March 6, 2023

Dear Chairman Weisz and honorable members of the House Human Services Committee,

Our organization, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action, is submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 2327 and respectfully requests that you render a “DO PASS” on this bill.

The testimony we provided on this bill when it was before the Senate Human Services Committee had two elements. First, we stated that our organization strongly supports the concept of creating a fathers’ adoption registry for North Dakota. Second, we noted that the bill itself was very complex and that given time constraints, we were unable to fully analyze it and determine if the proposed registry described in SB 2327 would accomplish all necessary program goals.

While we would like to have an adoption registry in place sooner as opposed to later, considering the benefits that would likely result, we believe that requesting a study by Legislative Management on this issue is an appropriate way to proceed. For this reason, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action respectfully requests that you render a “DO PASS” on SB 2327, as amended by the Senate Human Services Committee.

Please note that we have provided our original testimony submitted to the Senate Human Services Committee, below. Aside from the aforementioned conclusions, it goes into detail why our organization fully supports the concept of a registry. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill and please don’t hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Mark Jorritsma
Executive Director

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Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 2327

Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director
North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action
January 25, 2023

Dear Chairman Lee and honorable members of the Senate Human Services Committee. My name is Mark Jorritsma and I am the Executive Director of North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action. I am testifying on behalf of our organization in support of Senate Bill 2327 and respectfully request that you render a “DO PASS” on this bill, with suggestions.

The idea behind this fathers’ adoption registry is a way for adoption agencies to determine the difference between fathers who are indifferent in supporting their child and fathers who want to support their child but are unaware that the mother plans to put the child up for adoption. The registry essentially protects unaware fathers from the legal presumption that they don’t care by giving them a chance to claim responsibility for the child. Once a father is on the registry list, he will be given notice if the mother tries to put their child up for adoption. Dozens of states already have used father adoption registries for years with great success, so it is a proven approach.

Interestingly, having a fathers’ adoption registry also has implications for abortions. In speaking with crisis pregnancy leaders here in ND, I was told that some women choose abortion (sometimes performed in other states), once learning that the agency needs to exhaust all avenues to locate the birth father to terminate his rights. The registry is an efficient and proven way to do that. The burden falls back on the biological father to be proactive and put his name on the registry if he knows or suspects that a women may be carrying his child.

North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action supports the concept of a fathers' adoption registry for our state. That said, this bill is very complex and we would need more time to do in-depth analysis to determine if the proposed registry described in SB 2327 would accomplish all necessary program goals.

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For the aforementioned reasons, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action does support the intent of this bill, but would recommend that goals be established for the program and then compared to SB 2327 to ensure it achieves those goals. With that, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action asks for a “DO PASS” recommendation on Senate Bill 2327 from this committee, with the previously noted suggestions.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding my testimony. Thank you.