

SB2104 Testimony
Senate Human Services
January 9th, 2023

Senator Chairperson Lee, Vice Chair Cleary and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee.

My name is Vicki Peterson, I am a Family Consultant for Family Voices of ND, the Family-to-Family Health Information Network in ND. We are a grass-roots, non-profit who works with families who have children and youth with special health care needs, chronic health conditions and disabilities.

I am providing testimony in favor of SB 2104, section 50-11,1-18; Early Childhood Inclusion Support Services Program. This inclusion program offers many benefits for children with disabilities and special needs to learn from other children and focus on individual strengths of all children. All children learn together and develop a wider array of friendships and most importantly learn that others have differences in abilities and gain awareness.

I work with many families across the state that have much difficulty in finding child care for their child with a disability or special health care need. ND needs this program to build staff confidence and capability to deliver quality childcare to children with disabilities and special needs. Direct payments will allow for extra staff needed for inclusion to be had and technical support will add to new skill development. Inclusive care benefits all children. High quality experiences provide a foundation for development and peer interactions for positive outcomes. Inclusive programs lead to strengthening professional development and partnership with families. Asking for the continuation of the Early Childhood Inclusion Support Services Program and continued funding for direct payments.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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