

**Testimony of Landis Larson, ND AFL-CIO President
In Support of SB 2155
January 30, 2023**

Chairperson Lee and members of the Senate Human Services:

My name is Landis Larson, President of the North Dakota AFL-CIO. The North Dakota AFL-CIO is the federation of labor unions in North Dakota, representing the interests of all working people in our state.

I am testifying on behalf of the North Dakota AFL-CIO in support of Senate Bill 2155.

Community Healthcare Centers are so vital to many of our rural working families, oftentimes being the closest and most affordable option to get routine care. That's important to us because most working families don't have a lot of time or extra money to travel the hours that may be needed to get to the healthcare options in our largest communities. We all know that even with the best preparations, travel plans are often at the whims of North Dakota weather.

North Dakota is somewhat unique in that we have a number of large industrial employers in rural areas of our state. These working families are the backbone of many of our small communities. Many of our rural workers are already commuting long distances to work, and adding miles on to access healthcare makes it harder to make appointments. If we didn't have Community Health Centers serving our rural populations in the communities in which they live and work, we are sure our working families would have decreased health outcomes, especially when it comes to things like routine care, behavioral health and even dental care. The extra costs to these families would be significant. We are excited that we have an opportunity to not only sustain, but grow this important network of community health centers to serve more working families closer to home.

Community Health Centers are also important economic drivers in our communities, accessing federal funding and creating good jobs. Those good jobs spend money in our communities and have a multiplier effect to help economic growth in sectors like services and housing.

The North Dakota AFL-CIO fully supports SB 2155 and our Community Health Centers.