

Testimony

SB 2268

Dear Chair Lee and members of the Human Services Committee,

I am Brenda Bergsrud, Executive Director of Amachi Mentoring and Lake Region Community Shelter in Devils Lake. I want to stress the importance of providing shelter to those and need and the lack of shelter for juveniles.

I want to share ONE story of many situations we have had at the shelter in Devils Lake. A young man, age 17 presented himself and asked to stay. We are not able to house anyone under the age of 18. This child is attending high school, working at a fast-food restaurant, and wanted to stay in Devils Lake for these two reasons. He currently is under the care of his grandparents. I phoned the police and he begged for them to take him to jail so he would have a place to stay. He told us repeatedly that he could not stay with his grandparents as they "use", his mother also uses and his father is nowhere to be found. He repeated that he just wants to do good. Our hearts were broken, mine and the police officers who took him to CPS.

This is a scenario that the shelter staff encounters weekly. WE NEED HELP for these young people wanting to break the vicious cycle they are living in. Keep in mind that a suppressant for hunger is meth. Meth is being forced at these children at a young age. Parents are no longer caring for their children, causing homelessness and hunger.

The Lake Region Shelter is the only shelter in Benson, Nelson, Ramsey, Eddy, Towner and Cavalier counties.

Thank you for your consideration to support SB 2268 and the youth in need in North Dakota.

Brenda Bergsrud