

Senate Human Services Committee

Senate Bill 2276 – January 24, 2023

Testimony of Daniel Gulya, Attorney, Protection and Advocacy

Chair Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

My name is Dan Gulya; I am an attorney with the North Dakota Protection & Advocacy Project (P&A). P&A protects the human, civil and legal rights of people with disabilities. The agency's programs and services seek to make positive changes for people with disabilities where we live, learn, work and play.

P&A supports this effort to create a path for household members- parents, siblings, children - to be paid service providers to meet the extraordinary care needs of their family members. This bill supports person-centered home- and community-based services, so that families can ensure the essential level of care their loved one needs without making more painful sacrifices. We risk destabilizing families if they must choose between their career or supporting their family members, and this service gap increases the risk of institutionalization for individuals if they can't be served at home.

These families come to you with the issue of needing, and being authorized for, more hours of service than providers can supply. They are not asking for funding beyond what they have been told that they can have- if they can find other people to do the work. We hope you will all see the value in supporting families who find themselves in extraordinary circumstances, stretched thin ensuring that their loved ones receive necessary cares amidst our ongoing caregiver shortage.

In support of our agency's priorities, P&A has provided technical assistance to the constituents bringing this bill before you. I respectfully request support for SB 2276. Thank you for your time and I would be glad to answer any questions.

Daniel Gulya, Protection & Advocacy

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