

House Appropriations, HR Section

House Bill 1012

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Chairman Nelson and members of the committee,

My name is Mercedes Flores, and I am a doctoral Occupational Therapy student at the University of Mary. I am testifying today in support of HB 1012. This semester, I am completing my Capstone Project at Poppy's Promise in Bismarck. My project focuses on collaborating with staff to build a support and resource system for caregivers of children and young adults with disabilities. The time that you, our legislators, take to understand the developmental disabilities system and the needs of providers like Poppy's Promise is invaluable. These providers not only provide valuable services but also help ensure that hands-on learning and collaboration opportunities exist for students like me who want to positively impact the lives of others as we move into our chosen careers.

As a former employee of Poppy's Promise, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact person-centered services make in the lives of children and their families. These services strive to meet families where they are at and offer crucial support in helping them navigate the unique challenges associated with a disability. The impact of these services extends beyond the families served, and into the broader community.

I urge you to provide an appropriation that allows providers to maintain dedicated, quality employees by staying competitive with other industries. This support is vital to ensuring that these services continue to thrive and support our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today and for your consideration of this important issue.

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