

Testimony in support of:
House Bill 1012, with the 2025-27 Health & Human Services Executive Budget
January 27, 2025

Chairman Nelson, Vice Chair Stemen, and Committee Members:

My name is Kayla Weber, and I am pleased to provide my testimony to the North Dakota State Legislature. These are my own viewpoints and not my employers. I am testifying in support of bill number 1012. I sincerely appreciate the invitation to provide testimony.

In my career working with people with disabilities, I have come to believe that one of the most difficult things for the disabled community is seeing their role in society not being valued. I am a Support Coordinator at ABLE Inc., a company that helps support people with disabilities. We are like many of the businesses in this economy struggling to find staff. We have a high turnover rate, and the work can be hard on ones body.

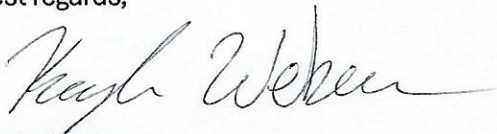
Bill 1012 to increase the budget to the DD waiver would benefit not only the people supported by getting more quality staff but would also help keep our current staff. We have a higher-than-average starting wage but with the cost of living, we don't pay a living wage. This has caused us to lower our hiring age. At the group home I work at we have an average age of 21. They are very responsible and often juggle working full-time and going to school. Once they get a 4-year degree we lose them to jobs who can pay a better wage.

We need this bill to pass for the lively hoods of the people we support. The 6 men at the group home I work at do not have verbal communication. They rely heavily on staff to maintain connections to loved ones and friends. Often when we lose staff who built those relations by being the bridge to connection. The relationship feels that hardship when they quit. I know there is a misunderstanding out there that people who cannot talk do not need social activities, but it is more they need the right people to help show the world how they communicate. I hope that people will see that individuals with disabilities are valuable citizens of the community and play an important role in moving our society forward.

Although there are many issues that cannot be solved simply by allotting more money, it is a step in the right direction. I ask you to support bill 1012 for the continuation forward in human rights.

Thank you

Best regards,



Kayla Weber