

Senate Bill 2176
Lt. Governor Michelle Strinden
House Education Committee
Rep. Heinert, chair
March 11, 2025
Couteau Room, State Capitol

Good afternoon, Chair Heinert and members of the House Education Committee. For the record, my name is Michelle Strinden, Lieutenant Governor for the State of North Dakota. I am here to provide our support for SB 2176, which proposes to move the administration of the Children's Cabinet into the Office of the Governor.

- I served as chair of the cabinet for nearly two years.
- During that time, I recognized the need for intentional focus and support to drive the cabinet to support children's systems.
- Moving the cabinet's administration within the Governor's Office will place additional focus on the cabinet and accelerate progress for children and families.
- We've partnered with an external consulting service that supported the development of a strategic plan and actionable goals.
- Working with the consultants, we'll continue to develop measures of success and working groups to dive deeper into issues across juvenile justice, child welfare, mental health continuum, education, early childhood and much more.
- Both the previous and current administrations have been engaged in supporting this effort. Both budget proposals included a line item that supports the cabinet with consultants and costs related to meetings, administration, document preparation, and other expenses.

- Our office is supportive of the current line item of \$65,000 which is reflected in HB 1001. These funds will support the cabinet with \$30,000 for facilitation consultants and \$35,000 in ongoing appropriations for supportive services.
- We are in support of the amendments proposed by Senator Axtman and we are grateful for her leadership on this bill.

I would like to introduce Meghan McCann with The Forum of Youth Initiative to walk through the national landscape of state Children's Cabinets and walk through the North Dakota strategic plan.