

Hello Chairman Ruby and Members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Donna Sorensen and I have the pleasure of serving as the Superintendent of the North Dakota School for the Deaf/Resource Center (NDSR/RC). I would ask this committee to give this bill a Do Pass recommendation.

The process of Special Education begins from a deficiency perspective – identifying the areas where children are “below the norm” or “below standard.” Changing the language of these disability categories – “emotional disturbance” to “emotional disability” and “hearing impaired” to “deaf or hard of hearing” – would be a start to viewing these children in a more neutral and possibly positive perspective. Every child has strengths and assets, sometimes because of their “disability.”

Thank you for your consideration of this powerful and appropriate change in the titles of the disability categories in North Dakota’s Special Education process.