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Chairman Ruby and members of the House Human Services Committee, my name is Sandra Tibke, and I am the executive director of the Foundation for a Healthy North Dakota.

I oppose House Bill 1458, which imposes penalties and consent requirements for self-spreading viruses or bacteria, specifically targeting vaccines.

**Concerns regarding the bill include:**

1. Misunderstanding of Vaccine Purpose: This bill misinterprets vaccines designed to enhance the immune system's ability to combat pathogens, not to spread viruses or bacteria.
2. Deterrent to Vaccination: Imposing penalties and requiring written consent may discourage vaccination. Parents could be dissuaded from vaccinating their children due to fear of penalties or inconvenience, thus risking public health.

**Key points against the bill:**

1. Live Attenuated Vaccines: These vaccines use weakened viruses to stimulate immune responses safely, with minimal risk of transmission.
2. Respect for Parental Choice: Parents must retain the right to make informed healthcare decisions for their children without facing legal repercussions or financial penalties.
3. Public Health Risks: A decline in vaccination compliance could lead to outbreaks of diseases like measles, which poses a serious threat without adequate immunization.
4. Protecting Vulnerable Populations: High vaccination rates are crucial for safeguarding individuals at greater risk of severe complications from vaccine-preventable diseases.
5. Penalty Fears for Healthcare Providers: This bill could discourage healthcare providers from administering important live, attenuated vaccines, such as oral rotavirus, for fear of penalty.

**Conclusion:**

Given vaccines' essential role in promoting community wellness, I urge the committee to reconsider the implications of House Bill 1458. It is vital to uphold the right to make

informed healthcare decisions without undue penalties for the well-being of our community and the future.

Thank you for your time and attention.