

Testimony in Opposition to HB 1562 as Written

Chairman Ruby and Committee Members,

My name is Leslie Bieber, and I serve as the superintendent of the Alexander School District in Alexander, ND. I want to thank the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on the importance of mandated reporter training. While I support the intent of this bill, I urge the inclusion of provisions that allow flexibility in the mandated training options for educators and staff.

This year, I personally completed the mandated reporter training before introducing it to my staff. I found it to be thorough and valuable, but also extremely challenging due to its emotionally heavy content, particularly the sections on neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse. I took the step of warning my staff about the difficult material and the time frame to take it.

One of my licensed staff members, a survivor of abuse, shared with me that even hearing my warnings triggered their trauma, making the training unmanageable for them. This individual is dedicated to our students but found the mandated training to be an emotional barrier rather than an educational tool.

I respectfully request that this bill be amended to include provisions allowing districts to select alternative, sensitive, yet equally effective training options. This flexibility would empower schools to address the diverse needs of their staff and still ensure that all educators are prepared to fulfill their roles as mandated reporters.

Thank you for considering this important perspective. I will stand for any questions.