



# North Dakota House of Representatives

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## Representative Jayme Davis

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## COMMITTEES:

Human Services  
Political Subdivisions

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## Testimony in Support of House Bill 1567

House Human Services Committee

Good Morning Chairman Ruby and members of the committee. For the record my name is Jayme Davis and I represent District 9, and I am honored to speak as a cosponsor of House Bill 1567. This legislation addresses a critical need within our state—access to dental and oral health care services for underserved populations, including Native American children, individuals with disabilities, and low-income families.

Access to dental care is not a luxury. My mother worked in the dental field for over 30 years and stressed that it is a necessity that impacts every aspect of our well-being, from physical health to educational and economic outcomes. Yet, for far too long, members of our tribal communities and other underserved groups have faced significant barriers to receiving these essential services. These barriers—whether related to geographic isolation, financial limitations, or lack of provider availability—create inequities that harm our families and hinder their futures.

This bill is particularly significant to our tribal nations. Oral health disparities among Native Americans are well-documented. Many of our people suffer from preventable dental issues at disproportionately high rates due to limited access to regular care. Children miss school, adults miss work, and elders endure unnecessary pain—all due to a system that fails to meet their needs.

House Bill 1567 takes meaningful steps to address these disparities by:

1. **Studying barriers to access:** The legislative management study will provide valuable insights into the unmet needs of Native American children and other Medicaid recipients, both on and off reservations.
2. **Investing in workforce solutions:** By promoting education, training, and recruitment for dental providers, this bill lays the groundwork for a more sustainable, inclusive dental workforce.
3. **Expanding access through partnerships:** Encouraging collaboration between state programs and tribal health organizations ensures culturally appropriate care that respects the sovereignty and unique needs of our nations.

Additionally, the appropriation of \$97,000 to support dental student rotations across the state is a critical investment in building long-term capacity, particularly in areas serving Native American populations. This funding not only supports students but also inspires a pipeline of providers dedicated to serving underserved communities. By passing this bill, you are affirming that every child, elder, and family in North Dakota deserves access to care. You are acknowledging the challenges faced by our tribal people and showing your commitment to partnering with us in finding solutions.

In closing, I urge you to vote in favor of HB 1567 and to prioritize oral health equity for all North Dakotans. Thank you for your consideration of this vital legislation. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,  
Jayme Davis  
Representative, District 9