



NORTH DAKOTA

Family Alliance LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Testimony Opposing House Bill 1595

Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director
North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action
February 5, 2025

Dear Chairman Ruby and honorable members of the House Human Services Committee,

My name is Mark Jorritsma and I am the Executive Director of North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action. I am testifying on behalf of our organization in opposition to House Bill 1595 and respectfully request that you render a “DO NOT PASS” on this bill.

Pregnant mothers and families often need help for a variety of reasons, from low incomes and lack of childcare training, to the emotional trauma inflicted by those around them who don’t support their pregnancy. We as a state must stand ready to help with these needs. In this state, we try to provide that help – with a significant share of it coming through the funding of pregnancy resource centers (PRCs).

PRCs that accept funding from the state must be responsible and accountable in their use of the money, as any agency or entity receiving government funding must be. However, a balance must always be struck between accountability and unreasonable scrutiny. The state must also ensure that unduly burdensome funding requirements do not undermine the very ability of an entity to provide the services requested by the state.

Looking at HB 1595, it contains requests for duplicative information, requires information that is not relevant to any funding it might receive from the state, asks the PRC to violate its core purpose, and more. For example, it wants the PRC to use its resources to provide information that is already publicly available on its Form 990 tax exemption filings. Further, a PRC is not a health care facility and does not need staff with the qualifications on-site as outlined in Subdivision 1(1)(f), even though they often have the individuals offsite and available. Third, if the definition of “Comprehensive Counseling” in Subdivision 1(1)(b) is combined with the requirements in Subdivision 1(3)(e), the bill would require PRCs to give client referrals to abortion clinics, something which violates the very mission and integrity of a PRC.

Aside from these specific issues with the bill, PRC services are free, and therefore they cannot be part of the HIPAA program, as they do not deal with insurance. Regardless, PRCs do typically

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follow the guidelines. Finally, there is a great need for state funding in rural communities who desperately need access to state funds, but don't have the staffing/bandwidth to comply with everything in HB 1595.

These are but a few of the many problems with HB 1595. It is nothing more than an attempt to silence and restrict North Dakota citizens from helping pregnant mothers, their pre-born children, and fathers via the services provided by PRCs. For all these reasons, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action requests that you render a "DO NOT PASS" on Senate Bill 1595.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony, and feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Mark Jorritsma
Executive Director
North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action