

Testimony Prepared for the
House Judiciary Committee

February 5, 2025

By: Chelsea Flory, Burleigh County Human Service Zone Director

RE: HB 1549: Relating to the Correctional Facility Grant Program

Chair Klemin, Vice Chair Karls, and members of the House Judiciary Committee, my name is Chelsea Flory. I serve as the Director of Burleigh County Human Service Zone, which includes the county of Burleigh. In addition, I am a member of the North Dakota Human Service Zone Director Association. I am here today to provide testimony in support of House Bill 1549.

Human Service Zones are responsible for helping qualified North Dakotans meet their basic needs and work towards the goal of self-sufficiency. This includes the administration of state and federally funded economic assistance programs such as Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). While the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS) determines the policy requirements for these programs, Human Service Zones help individuals determine eligibility.

Zone support of self-sufficiency goes beyond traditional economic assistance. We offer unique local services based on the needs of our communities. This can look like partnering with local agencies to provide telehealth services, serving as the local food pantry, or operating supply drives for back-to-school, holidays, and emergencies. In short, Zones have the flexibility to maximize local impact through creative, community-specific programs.

We also partner with the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (ND DOCR) to ensure that returning citizens have immediate access to economic assistance benefits and continuity of care. I have personally participated in outreach efforts for the James River Correctional Center (JRCC), the North Dakota State Penitentiary (NDSP), and resource fairs for various correctional facilities in North Dakota.

Participating in these efforts allowed me to educate individuals on our programs and self-

service portal, as well as collaborate with my colleagues in corrections to identify and support residents preparing for discharge. Beyond program education and application assistance, I made referrals for other community resources in the citizen's post-discharge location.

As a result of these collaborations, DOCR and DHHS have identified areas where policy and practice can be better aligned to ensure the delivery of best-in-class, customer-centric experiences. This bill directly supports the continuance and improvement of existing efforts.

It also supports the overall mission of human service agencies in North Dakota, which is to foster positive, comprehensive outcomes by promoting economic, behavioral, and physical health, ensuring a holistic approach to individual and community well-being.

On behalf of myself and the North Dakota Human Service Zone Directors Association, I support a do pass on HB 1549.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I stand for questions from the committee.