

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2030

Senate Appropriations – Education and Environment Division

January 21st, 2025

Chairman Sorvaag and members of the committee,

My name is Katie Jo Armbrust and I'm here today representing the North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People (NDCHP). As you've heard from my colleagues, homelessness is a reality in communities across our entire state, not just the big cities. While we don't have an epidemic to the extent of Los Angeles's Skid Row or encampments in the hundreds, as was stated before, we do have a growing number of people experiencing homelessness. Fortunately, we aren't the first ones to experience this, nor are we the first ones to do something pragmatic about it.

The Interim Government Services Committee did their due diligence with HCR 3030 and spent multiple hours and days learning about the homeless and the housing crisis across the state. I say crisis, not only because I want your attention to recognize the severe impact that a lack of housing has in our state, but also because I want you to know that we have the ability to do something about it. I've made comments about \$200 million in Housing Incentive Fund being a sticker shock because I've stood before some of you in the past, and I've watched the amounts allocated continue to fall short of what is needed. North Dakota has more at stake now: with a workforce shortage that is being buzzed about left and right, you cannot expect people to move here, work here, and stay here without adequate housing at all price points. Senate Bill 2030 is before you today as a solution worth supporting. We cannot continue to provide minimal funding to address the lack of housing in all areas of the state. \$200 million won't produce the 12,000 units of affordable housing needed in the next 4+ years, but it's an easier ask than the \$1 billion that it would take to accomplish it. The data, facts, and options have all been considered, and this is a solvable problem in front of you, but it won't solve itself.

So, with that, I respectfully ask for a Do Pass of Senate Bill 2030 as it stands in order to do something worth remembering about when it comes to housing and homelessness in North Dakota.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Jo Armbrust". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie Jo Armbrust

Lobbyist # 1692

701-388-6080