

Senator Dever and committee members

My name is Jeannie Hochstrasser and I reside in district 40. I am writing in support of funding the Behavioral Health Division in HB 1012. I currently work for the F5 project as a Care Coordinator/ Peer Support Specialist and am enrolled at Minot State Universities Addiction Studies program. I am writing in favor as both someone who one thrived because of programs like Free Through Recovery and as someone who continues to make an impact in others' lives with my lived experience. In May I will celebrate 5 years clean from drugs and alcohol. One of the biggest influences in my recovery journey was my Peer Support at the time, Racia Tobin. Racia believed in me when not even I could believe in myself. She walked with me as I learned how to be a productive member of society after years of drug use and incarceration. Through her weekly visits I was able to gain employment, housing and custody of my son. She helped me become independent after years of being dependent on a substance. Without her and the Free Through Recovery program, I'm not quite sure I would be where I am today.

Speaking of today, as I mentioned today, I am a full-time college student, full-time trusted employee, a mother, and a wife. Today I sit on the board of 3 recovery-related nonprofit's and give back to my community regularly. With my current position as a Care Coordinator with F5 Project, I get help people with my lived experience. Clients need programs like Free Through Recovery and Community Connect. Programs like these are a lifeline for those who struggle with mental illness and addiction. Furthermore, integration back into society after incarceration can be overwhelming to say the least. Often leading some to reoffend. By offering support through these programs and reducing recidivism rates, we can cut the cost of housing offenders in jails and prison. I sincerely want to thank you for the investments made into programs like this because they saved my life, and hope you continue making these investments so I can do my part in helping others.

Sincerely,

Jeannie Hochstrasser