

**Senate Appropriations Committee**  
**Jan 20th, 2025 HB 2096**  
**Testimony in Support**

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Dear Chair Bekkedahl and the members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

I urge a “Do Pass” on HB 2096

I believe that this bill is attempting to address a shortcoming within our state in terms of mental health access for individuals living in rural communities. Having read over all 737 bills on the ND Legislative website as of 1/19/25 and I found no bill to stop a particular problem that we are having in the world of mental health crisis in North Dakota.

Specifically, if you are experiencing suicidal crisis on the west side of North Dakota, you are likely not going to a clinic or a hospital, but rather a jail. Not because you’ve done anything criminal, but because there is no other place to put you.

I’d like the members of this committee to imagine the worst day they’ve ever had. The courage it takes for someone to finally call for help. And the realization that the only help you get is to be put behind some bars. You will not call again. As a survivor of suicide, I can assure you of that.

Today I am a suicide prevention advocate to fight for and assure we don’t let people fall through the cracks. And I have longed dreamed of services that could cover large areas of our rural communities and mobile crisis teams to handle the situations that arise.

Each suicide death impacts 135 people by the research and I believe personally that is felt even more and even harder in the small towns of our state. I think entire communities and small towns can be lost in these events. So, I believe any effort to reduce this trauma, to increase support across our state, and build hope for the future is worth funding. Please consider passing this bill to whatever extent is possible.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our state,  
Faye Seidler