

SB 2305  
2-12-24

Senate Appropriations-Human Resources Division  
SB 2305  
February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Chairman Dever and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

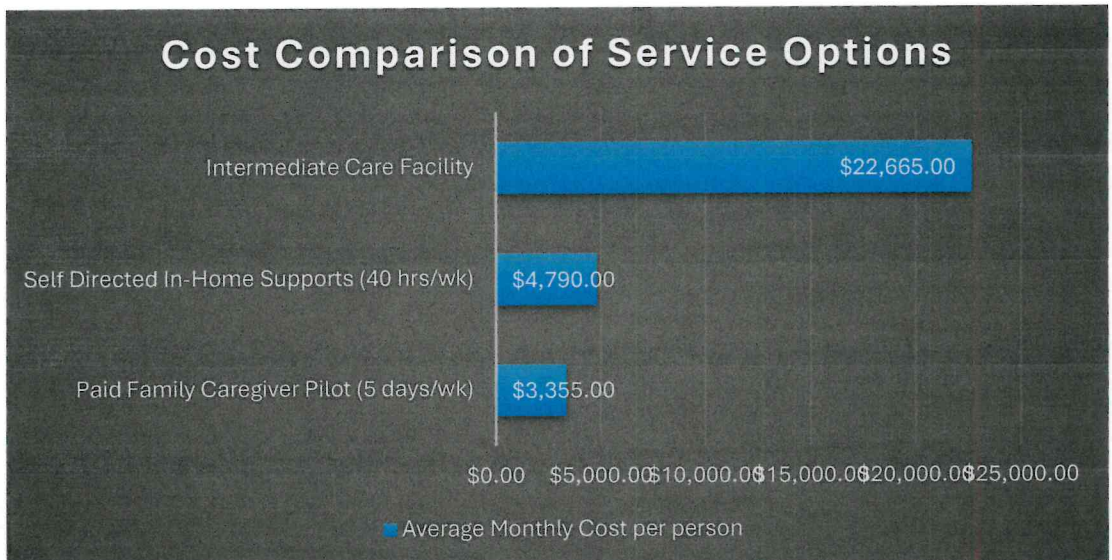
My name is Katynka Morrisette and I live in Bismarck, ND with my husband and our 3 young children. I am here today to give testimony on why I support SB 2305 and share with you how it impacts our family. I am the primary caregiver to our three young children Joey (age 9), Medrick (age 8), and Eleanor (age 7), who are on the Medically Fragile Waiver. They require extraordinary care due to their metabolic condition and other complexities.

Daily they require multiple doses of medications and nutritional support administered through their G or G/J tube, a complex feeding schedule and diet, glucose and ketone checks, breathing treatments, care for their medical ports, and assistance with home therapy treatment plans and daily living activities. Due to their high level of need and how specialized some of these cares are, we have been unable to find appropriately trained staff to provide support for them.

In 2023 legislation was passed (SB 2276) that developed the Paid Family Caregiver Pilot Program in North Dakota. Our family has been able to participate in the program and see firsthand the benefits that have resulted, like decreased hospital stays and improved mental health.

But today I wanted to touch on a few of the cost benefits of allowing legally responsible individuals to be part of the workforce to provide our already authorized services.

To be on a 1915c Medicaid Home and Community Based Services waiver, the participant must meet an institutional level of care. Below is a chart comparing the costs of a participant being institutionalized in an Intermediate Care Facility (ICF), Self Directed In-Home Supports and the cost of the Paid Family Caregiver Pilot.



While I could never put a dollar amount on the health and wellbeing of a child, and no parent ever wants to be faced with the possibility of placing their child in a care facility, this unfortunately is the reality many in our state have faced and will continue to if we don't work to provide the services

these children need. With caregiver turnover and workforce shortages across the state, many people are going without the services they are assessed for and authorized to receive.

We as caregivers know our children best and have training to provide these specialized cares, and it is crucial for this pilot to continue as the department works to get it implemented into the current waivers as a service option so that we can be a part of that workforce.

Thank you for your time today and allowing me to share with you some of the impact this pilot has had on our family, I am asking for a "Do Pass" recommendation on Senate Bill 2305 so that families in our state can access this service option with the improvements learned through the pilot program and fill the caregiver shortage that so many have experienced. I will now answer any questions you may have for me.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.



Katynka Morrissette

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