

I am writing to oppose consideration in its current form of SB 2222. Section 2, subsection 1.a. limits the health care provider "who can produce documentation relating to an individual's need for an assistance animal" to one licensed in North Dakota. This means one in Minnesota or South Dakota is not acceptable even if they are also "qualified and licensed to evaluate and diagnose disabilities." Perhaps they have exactly the same education and very similar careers but only the North Dakota provider's opinion will be considered valid. I also see a problem with this in the case that someone is moving here from a state in a far-flung region of the country. Why assume that the licensed medical provider in that patient's state of origin has a less valid expertise? In addition, I have questions about the requirement that, essentially, the relationship between the patient and provider has to be begun at least 30 days before the provider produces the documentation that the patient needs for an assistance animal. It seems entirely possible to me that a patient might need this animal much sooner than the 30 day waiting period that is required here. What about the case where an armed services veteran, only recently disabled, is deemed to need such an animal and referred to another provider to obtain the evaluation and documentation they might need to have such an animal in their rented living space? Why should they have to wait 30 days for the assistance this animal can give them? What if the veteran is coming home to North Dakota and got the evaluation and documentation at a facility in, say, North Carolina? Or even overseas? Partly because of these requirements, I ask that SB 2222 not receive a Pass recommendation. Thank you.