

**Testimony on Long-Term Care Facility Infrastructure Loan Fund**  
**Senate Human Services Committee**  
**March 19, 2025**  
**HB 1619**

Chair Lee and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee. My name is Belinda Moen, Administrator & CEO at Bethel Lutheran Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Williston, ND. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1619 on the critical need for infrastructure improvements in North Dakota's skilled nursing (SNFs) and basic care (BC) facilities.

We have been a staple in the community and the western region of North Dakota as well as the eastern part of Montana for decades. We are currently licensed for 100 skilled and 19 basic care beds and as such are one of the larger nursing facilities within our state. Our building was built in 1949 (*celebrating 76 years this May*) and it is showing its age. There has been talk for years about the need for a new facility, and that talk gained speed with the purchase of our new property in 2022. We are currently finalizing plans for that new nursing facility here in Williston.

As I'm sure you are aware, construction costs are extremely high, not only in ND, but nationwide. Those costs are compounded for us here in the Bakken as we see an approximate 15% increase in pricing simply due to location and availability of supplies. Those costs and how they affect funding can make or break a project, especially one of our size and scale. Our projected funding need is \$70 million dollars.

We are asking that the \$50 million be restored to \$100 million and amend the 2% interest rate back to the 1% rate, to mirror the hospital loan

program. Currently there are several facilities who are looking to build new or update their aging buildings around the state. By increasing the total available funds to \$100 million it will allow those organizations to make the needed updates. By leaving the total funds at \$50 million some of those organizations will lose out on that funding. Costs have risen for everything, and LTC is no different. The 1% interest rate is a huge benefit to making sure we are able to continue caring for the aging population in our state in a new modern facility.

Members of the committee, and all involved with this Bill, I urge your support for this program with a **Do Pass** to invest in the future of long-term care in North Dakota. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions.

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