

Testimony Prepared for the
Senate Human Services Committee

January 14, 2025

By: Desiree Sorenson, Mountrail McKenzie Human Service Zone Director

RE: SB 2140: Related to Dementia Services and Training

Chair Lee, and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, my name is Desiree Sorenson. I am the Director for the Mountrail McKenzie Human Service Zone, which includes the counties of Mountrail and McKenzie. In addition, I serve as Vice-Chair of the North Dakota Human Service Zone Director Association. I am here today to provide testimony in support of SB 2140.

Human Service Zones hold a variety of roles within the greater human service delivery system. Fourteen human service zones are qualified service provider (QSP) agencies and provide direct care to elderly/disabled individuals, in their homes, with the goal of remaining safely in their home community. In addition, two human service zones (Cass and Mountrail McKenzie) serve as vulnerable adult protection (VAPS), (now referred to APS- Adult protection Services), service providers through a contract with the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

SB 2140 provides an important service in caring for our aging population. Dementia is a debilitating disease. Community partners such as law enforcement, ambulance services, public health officials, and even human service zones are called to respond when individuals in our community present concerning behaviors. In older adults, these behaviors are often a result of dementia.

To better equip our community partners, access to creditable information and support is key. Training, resources, and awareness are critical ways that we can help prepare our

communities to help support those in need. In addition, timely and pertinent training for direct care providers is of huge importance. Those suffering from dementia require care, support, and compassion. SB 2140 helps prepare key community partners to better serve this vulnerable population.

Thank you for consideration of my testimony regarding Senate Bill 2112. I stand for questions from the committee.