

January 20, 2025

Senate Human Services Committee

Chairman Lee and Committee Members,

My name is Tim Mathern, Senator from District 11. I am the prime sponsor of SB 2171. I offer the bill at the request of mental health and law enforcement professionals.

There is concern about the involuntary hold/treatment North Dakota statute 25-03.1-26. In rural North Dakota it is difficult to find an expert to examine the individual in a 24-hour period and law enforcement informs me that on many occasions a 24-hour hold expires while the person is still in transport to a treatment facility. Also some psychiatrists have told me that with today's practice of doing blood tests as a part of a professional assessment, it is near impossible to do a professional assessment in 24 hours. The related consequence is that assessments done in such a short time frame are not in the patients interests as they are done without proper data or a person is released too early when treatment is indicated. Treatment is not started and multiple in and out episodes play out.

There is also confusion related to the fact that Minnesota has a 72-hour hold law.

The bill before is a compromise between the Minnesota 72 hour hold and the 24 hours hold and a reflection of practical realities of having professionals available. It retains the 24 hours but begins it when the examination contact is made with the assessment provider.

I ask you for a Do Pass recommendation on SB 2171.

Thank you for your service to our state.