

**Dear Members of the Committee,**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Bill SB 2145. My name is Rachel Fischer and I am a person who understands the importance of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. I am writing to emphasize the vital importance of this legislation in safeguarding life-saving services like the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and the 211 Information and Referral Helpline.

Programs like FirstLink are indispensable to the well-being of our community, providing critical assistance to individuals during moments of profound need. Whether it's through a phone call, text, or chat, these helplines are often the first lifeline for people in crisis, offering compassionate support and practical guidance.

The passage of SB 2145 is essential to ensuring these services remain effective and reliable by granting immunity to the professionals who dedicate themselves to answering these urgent calls. These individuals operate under rigorous, evidence-based guidelines outlined in the Network Agreement developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and Vibrant Emotional Health. These high standards guarantee that individuals in crisis receive care of the highest quality.

Granting immunity is not just about protecting the professionals performing this crucial work; it also reinforces the trust and continuity of services that countless people depend on during their most vulnerable moments. Supporting SB 2145 demonstrates a clear commitment to prioritizing mental health and ensuring the safety of those who rely on these essential resources.

I respectfully urge you to vote in favor of SB 2145 to help sustain the life-saving work of organizations like FirstLink and to continue supporting the mental health and well-being of North Dakotans.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and dedication to this critical issue. If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to reach out.

Sincerely,  
Rachel Fischer