

Dear Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Bill SB 2145. My name is Terry Lausch, and I am an advocate of FirstLink. I am writing to stress the importance of this legislation and its role in supporting essential services like the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and the 211 Information and Referral Helpline.

Programs like FirstLink are vital to our community, offering a lifeline to individuals during moments of crisis. By answering calls, texts, and chats, trained professionals provide life-saving support and guidance to those in need.

The passage of SB 2145 is critical to ensure that these professionals are protected through immunity while performing their essential work. Their efforts are guided by evidence-based practices and adhere to the rigorous standards established in the Network Agreement developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and Vibrant Emotional Health.

This bill not only safeguards the individuals who provide these services but also reinforces the trust and dependability of resources that so many rely on. By passing this legislation, the state demonstrates its commitment to prioritizing mental health and the well-being of its residents.

I strongly urge you to support SB 2145 and help ensure that organizations like FirstLink can continue their critical mission.

Thank you for your attention and for your dedication to improving the lives of North Dakotans. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Terry Lausch

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry Lausch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Terry Lausch
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