



North Dakota Senate

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COMMITTEES:

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Mr Chair and members of the Senate Workforce Committee:

This proposed board would encompass counseling, addiction counseling, social work, family and marriage therapy, and psychology. The bill is modeled on Wyoming's legislation.

I believe it has significant potential benefits for the state and its mental health professionals:

- **Reduced Administrative Burden:** Many licensees currently provide duplicate information to multiple boards. A composite board could streamline this process and allow for shared data.
- **Improved Technology Solutions:** Pooled resources would enable investment in a modernized software system, such as a licensee portal allowing professionals to manage multiple licenses simultaneously.
- **Modernized Operations:** This would bring outdated processes up to current standards, eliminating inefficiencies (e.g., the reliance on physical records storage).
- **Economies of Scale:** Smaller licensing groups would benefit from shared resources, ensuring equity and efficiency.
- **Future Opportunities:** Eventually, the certification of peer support specialists could transition from DHHS to the composite board, allowing DHHS to focus on education and providing an ombudsman role for licensees.

This initiative is about doing the right thing for the state and the mental health professions.

I also had another profession reach out, wondering if it would make sense for them to be included in this board - and that is Peer Support Specialists. They are currently part of a different composite board and don't feel like it is as good of a fit as this composite board would be.

I understand that change is difficult - and this is just the beginning of this conversation - this bill may be ahead of its time, but I think it is a good conversation to have. In Senate Bill 2308, the Governor has requested that ALL boards be assessed; to decrease the number of boards and commissions we have in this state. These 5 boards have many similarities, and I think would be a prime example of the transformation Governor Armstrong is looking for.