

2021 HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES

HB 1243

2021 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

HB 1243
1/19/2021

Relating to requiring office of faith-based and community initiatives to establish an outreach and educational program for clergy regarding mental health; and to provide for a legislative management report

Chairman Weisz opened the hearing at 9:25 a.m.

Representatives	Roll Call
Representative Robin Weisz	P
Representative Karen M. Rohr	P
Representative Mike Beltz	P
Representative Chuck Damschen	P
Representative Bill Devlin	P
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	P
Representative Clayton Fegley	P
Representative Dwight Kiefert	P
Representative Todd Porter	P
Representative Matthew Ruby	P
Representative Mary Schneider	P
Representative Kathy Skroch	P
Representative Bill Tveit	P
Representative Greg Westlind	P

Discussion Topics:

- Mental health services inadequacy
- Faith based initiatives office

Rep. Marvin Nelson, District 9 (9:26) introduced the bill, testified in favor, and submitted testimony #1461.

Rev. Carel Two-Eagle (9:35) testified in opposition and submitted testimony #3069.

Chairman Weisz adjourned at 9:37.

Tamara Krause, Committee Clerk

HB 1243 Faith Based Mental Health initiative

Testimony of Representative Marvin E. Nelson, District 9

House Human Services 1/19/2021

Chairman Weisz,

Mental health including addictions is a serious problem in North Dakota today. One of the great difficulties is we really don't have a lot of providers; access is especially poor in the rural areas. What we do have for counselors are pastors, ministers, priests. These highly trained professionals are present throughout North Dakota, they interact with and counsel their flocks on a variety of things. Probably the most common thing we think of them counseling is on family relationships or marital counseling.

That said, every day they deal with people who are suffering from mental health problems. Their training does not in most cases include a lot of education directly in things like mental health or addictions.

The idea is to improve their knowledge. Now it's not thinking of turning them into a counselor on the same level as someone with years of specialization. It's giving them basic tools and one of the very important tools is understanding what is available to people. Things like telehealth.

Improving their knowledge will have an effect on what people in their parishes know.

I believe this can be done at low cost and yet have a significant effect on mental health in ND. Rural areas especially really need things to get going and it is going to take a long time to get enough mental health workers in place. Let's use what we have, strengthen what we have.

The whole idea is to use our Office of Faith Based Initiatives in OMB to have a mental health, faith based initiative to meet a great need of the people of ND.

<< TESTIMONY ON HB 1243 >>

Rev. Carel Two-Eagle, PK, PB,
Church of the Helping Hand, Inc.

A non-denominational non-sectarian Church where we worship by helping others

Good morning Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee. For the record, my name is Reverend Carel Two-Eagle. I am the Presiding Bishop of the Church of the Helping Hand, Inc; and have been since the preceding Bishop passed on on January 11, 1993. I am also a Keeper of a Holy Pipe, which is central to our Traditional spiritual Ways.

I want to testify on HB 1243 for the purpose of clarifying the intent of the bill. If this bill *requires* clergy to have the training outlined in HB1243, *and* all churches to provide such materials, it violates both the doctrine of Separation of Church and State and the First Amendment section on freedom of religion. However well-meaning HB1243 may be, it is known that the road to Hell is paved with good intentions. The experiences of us Indigenous over the past 500+ years proves that.

If it does not require clergy to have whatever training is outlined in HB 1243, it does not violate the First Amendment, but it still appears to violate the doctrine of Separation of Church and State, therefore I am wary of this kind of legislation.

Traditional Lakota and other Indigenous spiritual Ways take a much different approach to matters including mental health and addiction than the majority culture or its churches do.

We had no addiction problems prior to the coming of Europeans to our Turtle Island. We have always had very effective ways in our various cultures' Traditions for dealing with mental health problems.

I would take a very stubborn stance against our Church being required to provide – or even to develop – materials on these subjects that might violate our Traditional taboos and requirements. My stance against any requirement that we use majority culture materials to deal with these would be even more stubborn. I am from the Standing Rock Nation. In my language, Inyan Woslata (EE-yanh-wo-SLAH-tah). It means, “stubborn as a rock”. This is my 13th consecutive Session and my 23rd Consecutive year at the Legislature. I have dealt with and/or repelled racist and anti-Traditional attacks for most of that time. Anyone who knows me knows I am either the immovable object or the

irresistible force, and it has been said I can change from one to the other and no one would notice. I have been a successful Native Spiritual Rights activist since childhood.

That being so, I trust that if this bill in any way can violate either the First Amendment or the doctrine of Separation of Church and State, you will give it a unanimous Do NOT Pass recommendation, and save the state money and time it will waste defending itself against a lawsuit it cannot win.

Thank you for hearing it in a good way now. I am always available to answer any questions.

2021 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

HB 1243
2/1/2021

Relating to requiring office of faith-based and community initiatives to establish an outreach and educational program for clergy regarding mental health; and to provide for a legislative management report

Chairman Weisz opened the committee meeting at 4:20 p.m.

Representatives	Attendance
Representative Robin Weisz	P
Representative Karen M. Rohr	P
Representative Mike Beltz	P
Representative Chuck Damschen	P
Representative Bill Devlin	P
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	P
Representative Clayton Fegley	P
Representative Dwight Kiefert	P
Representative Todd Porter	P
Representative Matthew Ruby	P
Representative Mary Schneider	P
Representative Kathy Skroch	P
Representative Bill Tveit	P
Representative Greg Westlind	P

Discussion Topics:

- Grant availability
- Bush Administration program establishment

Rep. Kathy Skroch (4:21) moved a **Do Not Pass**.

Rep. Matthew Ruby (4:21) second.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Robin Weisz	Y
Representative Karen M. Rohr	Y
Representative Mike Beltz	Y
Representative Chuck Damschen	Y
Representative Bill Devlin	Y
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	N
Representative Clayton Fegley	Y
Representative Dwight Kiefert	Y
Representative Todd Porter	A
Representative Matthew Ruby	Y
Representative Mary Schneider	N

Representative Kathy Skroch	Y
Representative Bill Tveit	Y
Representative Greg Westlind	Y

Motion Carried Do Not Pass 11-2-1

Bill Carrier: Rep. Bill Tveit

Chairman Weisz adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

Tamara Krause, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1243: Human Services Committee (Rep. Weisz, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (11 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1243 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.