

Finance and Taxation Committee

HB 1497

February 2, 2021

Chairman Headland and members of the committee, my name is Rachel Hafner. I am the Executive Director for The Arc, Upper Valley in Grand Forks. I am providing your committee with written testimony and asking that you vote “do pass” on HB 1497.

Our nonprofit has been serving Grand Forks and the surrounding region since 1955. Our mission has always been to ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) can live meaningful and productive lives in the community. For us to advocate for the basic human rights of the approximately 1200 people with I/DD in the Grand Forks region, we must raise sufficient revenue to sustain our organization. Like all nonprofits, we have a diverse fundraising plan, which includes soliciting direct donations. As an organization that does not currently receive any state or federal funding, it is important that we inspire individuals to partner with us monetarily so that we can positively impact the individuals that we serve, their families, and the community at large.

HB 1497 provides a tax incentive that would allow individuals to give larger donations directly to small charities such as ours. This would not only facilitate donor choice, allowing them to support the organizations that they are passionate about, but it would also be a game-changer for our organization. We would be able to engage with donors who have the capacity to give larger donations, which would mean less time soliciting many small donations and more time doing the actual work of the organization. It would also put our organization on a level playing field with larger charities. Please note that while we want to engage with people who can give larger donations, we appreciate every donation we receive regardless of amount.

We ask that you vote “do pass” on HB 1497 so that nonprofits such as The Arc, Upper Valley can offer tax incentives to donors who wish to contribute directly to charities of their choice. And we in turn will continue to ensure that all people with I/DD can live, work, go to school, and play in the community without limitations.

I am available by phone or email to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

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