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Testimony of Support Senate Bill 2089
House Human Services
March 3, 2021

Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee, my name is Kirsten Dvorak. I am the executive director of The Arc of North Dakota, which includes all six Arc chapters in North Dakota: Bismarck, Bowman, Dickinson, Fargo, Grand Forks, and Valley City. Our mission is to improve people's quality of life with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively support their full inclusion and community participation.

The Arc of North Dakota asks for a do pass on SB 2089 as amended. The autism voucher fills a need not met by the autism waiver, helping families who may not afford respite services to care for their child. The voucher could be used to help a child communicate through assistive technology. The proposed amendments would allow families to access services and make sure that the funding is used to meet the family's needs.

The Arc of North Dakota supports the need for The Autism Taskforce. The task force helps not just those that are receiving services through the waiver or the voucher. The task force brings together a group of individuals to better understand the community's needs to serve those on the autism spectrum better.

My son, who is 21, has attended several task force meetings and has shared his perspective and helped others understand what it's like to live with autism within the community. It's where he heard about the ASTEP program at Minot State and is now in his second semester working towards a degree in graphic design.