

TESTIMONY OF

Lisa Kudelka, Director of Operations, Human Resource Management Services (HRMS)

Chairman Veda and members of the Government and Veterans Affairs Committee, I am Lisa Kudelka, Director of Operations, HRMS within the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). I am here to testify in support of House Bill No. 1058 relating to the state's leave sharing program.

The state's leave sharing program allows state employees to donate annual leave to a fellow state employee who is suffering from, or has a relative or household member suffering from, an extraordinary or severe illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that has caused or is likely to cause the employee to take leave without pay or terminate employment. State employees can also donate sick leave to a fellow state employee in the same situation, and annual or sick leave to employees receiving an organ or bone marrow donation. The leave sharing program has been in place for state employees since the mid-1990s.

Currently, the request and approval to receive donated leave is handled independently by each state agency. Each agency determines if the request meets the requirements outlined in North Dakota Century Code, then handles receiving and processing the actual donation of leave. This has been a paper-driven process. Individuals requesting the shared leave are required to complete a paper application, and individuals wishing to donate leave are required to complete a paper application, both of which go to the agency staff member responsible for the program.

The goal of this legislation is to reduce the inconsistencies in how this process is handled across state agencies. State agencies have developed a different understanding or definition of an extraordinary or severe illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition. Employees with similar conditions have been approved by some agencies and other agencies have declined the same type of request.

This legislation would provide HRMS with the ability to centrally administer the shared leave program for state employees, providing a consistent program for requesting and donating annual and/or sick leave. If this legislation passes, HRMS would go through the Administrative Rules process to develop and implement the process for reviewing and approving applications for shared leave. This would include working with state agencies to develop consistent standards for qualifying medical conditions and the other requirements outline in current

North Dakota Century Code. With this change, HRMS could streamline the request process and move it to an online/paperless process.

North Dakota Century Code sections 54-06-14.1 and 54-06-14.2, authorize the existing state annual and sick leave sharing programs. These sections are being repealed. The new section to chapter 54-06 created by section 2 of this bill consolidates and simplifies the language currently contained in the two existing sections of code. This bill proposes no change to the program itself, but simply authorizes the central administration through HRMS.

Mr. Chairman and committee members, this concludes my testimony. I ask your support for House Bill 1058. I would be happy to answer any questions.