

HB 1264**Senate Human Services Committee****Testimony of Mykaela Jacobson****In support****March 17, 2021**

Madam Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am here today to offer testimony in support of bill HB 1264, which changes the language pertaining to and the definition of a parent coordinator. The impact of these changes would make a great change in the field of social work and within the justice system dealing with children and families. Currently, I am a social work student at the University of Mary. These changes will be beneficial to my classmates and me's future in the field as well as current social workers.

Currently, HB 1264 states that parent coordinators can only be neutral individuals in parenting disputes during parenting time. This restricts them from being able to mediate issues outside of those designated parenting times. If there were issues that pertain to the child or children outside of this time, they have to go to someone else to help them with their dispute; often this is the courts and or Child Protective Service. After speaking with a local CPS worker, many of the disputes between parents and guardians can and could be figured out by mediation with a parent coordinator. These parent coordinators know the parents and the children as well as their unique situations; this gives them a better understanding of how to remedy any conflicts. With these changes, it will take extra pressure off the courts and Child Protective Services as well as save time and money. These language changes will be more beneficial for the children's well-being in the long run by finding a quicker solution between the parents.

On behalf of current and future social workers, I thank you for your time today and urge you to a "do pass" recommendation on HB 1264.