



HB 1244

House Finance and Taxation

Monday, January 23, 2023

Rep. Craig Headland, Chair

Chairman Headland and Members of the House Finance and Taxation Committee:

My name is Roxane Romanick and I'm writing as the representative for Designer Genes of ND, Inc., as their Executive Director. Designer Genes' membership represents 230 individuals with Down syndrome that either live in our state or are represented by family members in North Dakota. Designer Genes' mission is to strengthen opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome and those who support them to earn, learn, and belong. I am also the parent to an adult daughter with Down syndrome, who desires as much independence as any other young adult and who is working and trying hard to be a contributing North Dakota citizen.

Designer Genes is in support of HB 1244 and asks for your consideration of a "yes" vote. No matter what internet search you do around employment statistics for individuals with disabilities you will find a significant difference between people with disabilities and people without disabilities. If you have an intellectual disability, the statistics become harsher. Estimates are that only about 44% of individuals with intellectual disabilities, such as Down syndrome, are working and of that number only 53% are working competitively. ([National Snapshot of Adults with Intellectual Disabilities in the Labor Force \(specialolympics.org\)](http://specialolympics.org)). HB 1244 opens the door to willing businesses and employers and often that is the first step to competitive employment for people with disabilities. Removal of the sunset clause and clarifying language creates more permanence for employers to engage.

Please consider the passage of HB 1244.

Roxane Romanick
Executive Director
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