

Dear Chair Weisz and members of the House Human Service Committee,

My testimony is in support of the House Bill 1390. I ask that you give this bill a Do Pass.

I'm a suicide prevention advocate in North Dakota and it is essential that we have the best data possible to understand suicide related deaths in order to prevent them. I assume everyone cares about suicide and would do everything they can to give the people of our state as much hope and resources as possible. So, I understand the main challenge in supporting this kind of legislation may be due to realistic limitations in the capacity and funding of our state.

I've seen the sponsors of this legislation working across all sectors and organizations dedicated to suicide prevention in North Dakota to ensure we're looking at the most effective piece of legislation we can offer. It is designed to seamlessly integrate into our existing structures, work with existing stakeholders to minimize cost on our state, and solve a problem identified by the people doing this work.

As a person doing this work, I can't overstate its value. My role is studying community data and outcomes. I would personally advocate for this bill because the preventative cost of suicide isn't something to overlook. Suicide is rarely an individual impact. It impacts families, communities, and can ripple out throughout our state. It can turn what was a home for decades for some people into a place of painful memories they don't want to come back to.

At time of writing this, according to our state data, suicide is the second highest cause of death for individuals below the age 40 - <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/public-health/health/data-and-statistics/SHA>. We know suicide can be more prevalent with veterans, LGBTQ+ populations, police, and indigenous communities. We know it can be higher for farmers in our state as well for a variety of reasons.

When I think about the cost and effort of a suicide fatality review commission, I think about it as an investment in our state and our future. When I think about suicide prevention, I would love if we could give hope to every person today. And while every effort is made to create space across many sectors in our state to keep people safe and supported, we need this commission to strengthen our downstream suicide prevention efforts.

The data we can learn is invaluable for preventing future suicides that have devastating impacts on communities and families. Please find the capacity to create this and vote Do Pass.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our state

Best regards,
Faye Seidler