

Testimony on House Bill 1390
House Human Services Committee
January 25, 2023

Chairman Weisz and Members of the North Dakota House Human Services Committee,

I am writing to urge a “Do Pass” recommendation for HB 1390: relating to the creation of a suicide fatality review commission; and to provide an appropriation.

On October 10, 2022, I lost my husband Erik, 32, to suicide. This happened fewer than two years after his cousin Grant, 20, also died by suicide. Both were raised and died in North Dakota.

The more I learn about suicide the more I find how little we still know about it. My husband knew about crisis hotlines, he had been going to therapy, and had a safety plan. I knew what signs to look for, but he'd exhibited these same warning signs the entire 14 years I knew him. Still he took his own life, and every day I'm left wondering what else I could have or should have done to stop him. While incredible work has been done to destigmatize talking about suicide, I think we still have a far way to go to effectively prevent it.

A commission that takes a comprehensive look at suicides that occur in our state would be able to look for commonalities amongst suicide-related deaths, and give us a much better understanding on how to prevent these deaths in the future.

I urge a “Do Pass” recommendation because this bill gives me hope that we may better grasp the root causes of suicide so we can save lives in North Dakota.

Regards,

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