

Chairman Nelson and Members of the House Appropriation Committee – Human Resource Division,

As a father of two teenage girls, I witness firsthand the challenges our youth face daily. The pressures of modern life, amplified by social media, academic stress, and societal expectations, have created a perfect storm for mental health struggles. It is imperative that the state of North Dakota maintains and enhances access to critical resources like a 24/7/365 crisis line to answer calls, chats, and texts—services that can quite literally save lives.

I urge your strong support for **HB 1012**, which ensures continued and increased funding for the **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** and the **211 Information and Referral Helpline**. These programs provide free, confidential, and lifesaving support to individuals across our state.

The need is clear: FirstLink has reported rising call, chat, and text volumes, reflecting an alarming and growing demand for mental health services. Suicide is now one of the leading causes of death in North Dakota, claiming over 130 lives in 2021 alone—above the national average. Each of these numbers represents a family devastated, a community shaken, and potential unfulfilled.

For those in rural areas or those who feel isolated, these lifelines are often the only accessible resource during moments of crisis. Sustained and increased funding is not a luxury—it is a necessity to ensure every person in need has somewhere to turn, no matter the time of day or night.

As a parent and a North Dakotan, I implore you to invest in these critical services and provide the necessary support to address our state's mental health crisis. Together, we can make a difference and ensure no one has to face these struggles alone.

Thank you for considering this vital initiative and for your commitment to the well-being of all North Dakotans.

Sincerely,

Roland Lade
roland_lade@hotmail.com

613 Fairway Dr

Casselton, ND 58012