



HB 1547
Senate Education
Tuesday, March 12, 2025
Senator Todd Beard, Chair

Chairman Beard and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Roxane Romanick and I'm here today as a representative for Designer Genes of ND, Inc., Designer Genes represents individuals with Down syndrome and their families across the state. 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 is competitively employed due to her access to general education curriculum and special education supports.

We project, that outside of North Dakota students with Down syndrome being homeschooled, all other children, youth, and young adults with Down syndrome are covered by the guarantees of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and are served under Individual Education Plans and afforded special education services. The provisions of a free and appropriate education (FAPE) and learning in a least restrictive environment (LRE) with specially designed approaches to learning and targeted adaptations mean that our students have learning opportunities available to them that older individuals with Down syndrome went without. As an organization, we are concerned about the academic achievements of our children, youth, and young adults with Down syndrome in North Dakota because we know that high expectations, highly qualified professionals, and quality instructional strategies are critical to learning. We most certainly know all of the above requires adequate funding and funding methodology.

Designer Genes is in support of HR 1547, but I am asking the committee to consider an addition to the language of an amendment that would include a representative from a statewide family support organization that supports family members of children who receive special education. I'm asking for the consideration of this added language, because there is no parent representation on the committee and the study language discusses the use of Medicaid funds for reimbursement. Under the Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), parents have to provide permission for any medical insurance, including Medicaid, to be used to school-based services. Since there will be discussion in this study that will impact parent and student rights, I ask for strong consideration of this added language.

Thank you for your time and I would answer any questions.

Roxane Romanick
Representative/Lobbyist
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