



Testimony Prepared for the Senate Human Services Committee
HB 1454 – Related to Vaccinations
Kim Jacobson, Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone Director
March 11, 2025

Chair Lee and members of the Senate Human Service Committee, my name is Kim Jacobson, I serve as the Director for the Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone, which includes Traill and Steele Counties, and as President of the North Dakota Human Service Zone Director Association. I am here today to express my concerns about HB 1454.

Human service zones, and our host county employers, are considered political subdivisions. Additionally, as provided for in NDCC Chapter 50-01, human service zone directors serve as the legal custodian of youth in our public foster care system. When a child is in need of protection, Juvenile Courts order zone directors to provide legal care, custody, and control of that child. The scope of this legal custodianship or guardianship includes medical decision-making.

The North Dakota Human Service Zone Director Association is concerned that HB 1454 may limit our ability to properly serve youth that are in our legal care. Children in the public child welfare system can present with a wide array of medical needs. This includes “medically complex” children (or children who have two or more concurrent, chronic conditions that require ongoing medical attention and/or limit activities of daily living). HB 1454 proposed restrictions on political subdivisions could force us to choose between the medical interest of a child or violating state law.

Please amend HB 1454 to exempt human service zones. This can be accomplished by updating Subsection 2 of Section 1 (Page 1, Line 11) to read as follows: “This section is not applicable to the department of corrections and rehabilitation or to human service zones.”

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony and proposed amendment. I stand for questions from the committee.