

SENATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

HB 1454 - OPPOSITION

Brenda Sallman, RN

Traill District Health Unit

Greetings, Chair Lee and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee. My name is Brenda Stallman. I am the Executive Director of Traill District Health Unit, serving communities of Hillsboro, Mayville, Portland, Hatton, Clifford, Galesburg, Buxton, and Reynolds.

I am opposed to HB 1454. As a public health professional, we are called upon to serve and protect our population. To do that, my staff of four is needed and must be available to respond to disease outbreaks and cannot be responsible for spreading communicable diseases to each other and our citizens. We care for the elderly, helping them age successfully in their homes for as long as it is safe to do so. We cannot needlessly introduce this vulnerable population to a vaccine preventable disease that is dangerous and deadly.

We provide nursing services to our local schools' students and staff. It is unthinkable that we could introduce a circulating disease to this population, who in turn would take it home to their families. It is imperative that we are vaccinated and that I know of my staffs' vaccination status to protect them and those we serve.

I have not heard of any county sheriff's agency that is overstaffed. Traill County's is no different. They must respond daily to situations that involve dangerous offenders who spit, bite, defecate, and urinate on or around the officers. Traill County does not have its own

jail, so our law enforcement personnel spend many hours in close contact with inmates transporting them to facilities outside of our county. These offenders, whom we do not know of their current health status that can quite easily include transmittable diseases, are not interested in the health and well-being of our officers. But we are, and we must be able to protect them with the vaccines available for them to stay healthy and continue protecting our public.

Traill County is just like every other ND County. We have staffing that is very lean in numbers, with no exceptions. We care about the people we employ and the people we serve. Our families, our neighbors, our businesses, our voters, our clergy; all the people that keep our communities going. I am asking you not to put our staff and the people of ND in harms way. Thank you for your consideration of opposing HB 1454.