

Senator Lee and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee,

Allison Goetz, Sterling, North Dakota.

I am writing in support of SB 2305 for an Act to amend and reenact section 50-24.1-47 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the family paid caregiver service program and the cross-disability advisory council.

This bill is a huge opportunity to help all those families with special needs children. Our son who was diagnosed with Cask Gene Mutation will be starting school next year and we are concerned for how it is going to go. There is really no support for him after school or before. My daughter goes to blast and that would not be a good program for him. He needs more one on one support and he would not get that there. It is just high school students who would not be used to watching someone like that, especially with all the other kids there. With school hours changing now, it is making it harder for parents with children who have special needs to be able to hold a job. I will most likely need to leave my job and also take a pay cut to be able to support my child. We do have respite, but that is not something we can count on. We have one good person and that is it. No one is wanting to work in respite and if they do, it is most likely someone you can not trust. It is younger high school kids who do not want to actually play with our son or they are unable to come out to our house in Sterling or it is someone who is out of high school just looking for money. They could be on drugs or someone who we could not trust. With respite they do not do drug tests. We have had multiple people try and take care of our son through respite who were not a good fit. We had a younger girl who just sat on her phone while Easton was in the back room playing and not being supervised, we had some who showed up for one hour and then claimed she was sick and left. So we had to leave our job and go home to be with our son and when we contacted her again, she kept saying she was sick and ended up quitting. That same girl ended up being on drugs. We had actually asked the program manager after she became a parent if she would trust the people they have hired to watch her child and she actually said absolutely not. If she is unable to trust those people with a "normal" child, how are we supposed to trust them with our children who are unable to speak for themselves or know what is right from wrong. With my son I have had leave my job during the middle of the day due to him being in Becep and needing to take him to daycare afterwards. I have had to leave my job at random hours due to him being in therapy multiple days a week. It is very hard to find a job to be flexible with a schedule like that. This would be a huge impact on all those families out there who have to take care of their children, when others are unable to.

In conclusion, I am asking the committee to vote to pass this bill.

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