

SB2256
Senate Human Services Committee
January 26th, 2021

Senator Chairwoman Lee and Vice Chair Senator Roers and Members of the Senate Human Service Committee.

My name is Vicki Peterson, and I am here to testify in favor of Senate Bill 2256 for a study of the home and community-based services for individuals with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities.

I am a Family Consultant for Family Voices of ND and I work with families who have children and youth with disabilities and special health care needs. A big part of my job is to help families navigate systems of care. Currently in ND, the term of Intellectual Disability is a very narrowly defined and for many who have been found eligible as having a Developmental Disability, are not found eligible for the Developmental Disability Waiver on the fact that an Intellectual Disability does not present as clearly as it may for others. These same people, many, the federal programs, such as SSA, do define as having a Developmental Disability. There seems to be a discrepancy in defining the term Developmental Disability.

Over the years that I have helped families navigate systems, I have supported families who have children that have had diagnosis of Developmental Disability but do not meet the eligibility criteria for the DD wavier in this state. We have a system of silos and the silos are not meeting the needs of children and our state. I believe a study will help lawmakers make better options for families, increase the productivity in our young children and youth to succeed and families have access to support. I believe ND can do a better job; I believe in ND we can find the ways to do so.

Some of the hardest conversations I have had with parents is *"I was told my child has a developmental disability, but my child is too smart"*. Those are times I do not have much in my toolbox to say.

I support the study so that we can support all children with disabilities in a system of care that looks at the child as a whole and the needs not just what a child my score for an intellectual disability.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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