

2023 SENATE HUMAN SERVICES

SB 2215

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee
Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

SB 2215
1/23/2023

Relating to an appropriation to the department of health and human services for recreation services for individuals with developmental disabilities.
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9:00 AM **Madam Chair Lee** called the hearing to order. **Senators Lee, Cleary, Clemens, K. Roers, Weston, Hogan** are present.

Discussion Topics:

- Social programs
- Activities
- Access community

9:01 AM **Senator Randy Lemm**, introduced SB 2215 to include amendment
Testimony in favor #15436

9:04 AM **Tom Newberger, Director/CEO Red River Human Services Foundation Fargo and Wahpeton ND** testimony in favor #15423

9:13 AM **Phyllis Priss, Program Director of the Red River Human Services**
verbal testimony in favor

9:24 AM **Tina Bay Director, Developmental Disabilities Section North Dakota of Health and Human Services** verbal testimony in favor

9:26 AM **Madam Chair Lee** closed the hearing.

10:19 AM **Madam Chair Lee** reconvenes for more discussion, nothing more provided.

10:20 AM **Madam Chair Lee** closed the meeting.

Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee
Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

SB 2215
1/30/2023

Relating to an appropriation to the department of health and human services for recreation services for individuals with developmental disabilities.
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3:50 PM Madam **Chair Lee** called the meeting to order. **Senators Lee, Cleary, Clemens, K. Roers, Weston, Hogan** are present.

Discussion Topics:

- Service expansion
- Current funds

Senator Clemens moved a **DO PASS** and **REREFER** to **APPROPRIATIONS**.

Senator Weston seconded.

Roll call vote.

Senators	Vote
Senator Judy Lee	Y
Senator Sean Cleary	Y
Senator David A. Clemens	Y
Senator Kathy Hogan	N
Senator Kristin Roers	Y
Senator Kent Weston	Y

The motion passed 5-1-0.

Senator Clemens will carry SB 2215.

3:58 PM **Madam Chair Lee** closed the meeting.

Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2215: Human Services Committee (Sen. Lee, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** and **BE REREFERRED** to the **Appropriations Committee** (5 YEAS, 1 NAY, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2215 was rereferred to the **Appropriations Committee**. This bill does not affect workforce development.

2023 SENATE APPROPRIATIONS

SB 2215

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations - Human Resources Division Rough Rider Room, State Capitol

SB 2215

2/8/2023

A bill for an act to provide an appropriation to the Department of Health and Human Services for recreation services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

9:48 AM Chairman Dever opened the hearing on SB 2215. Members present: Senators Dever, Davison, Burckhard, Mathern, Kreun.

Discussion Topics:

- Recreation facilities availability
- Services for less fortunate
- State budget request

9:49 AM - Senator Randy Lemm, Hillsboro, introduced SB 2215 and testified favorably.

9:54 AM Tom Neuberger, Executive Director for Red River Human Services Foundation in Fargo & Wahpeton, ND, testified favorably. Testimony #19813

10:04 AM Senator Davis moved Do Pass on SB 2215.

Senator Mathern seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Dick Dever	Y
Senator Randy A. Burckhard	Y
Senator Kyle Davison	Y
Senator Curt Kreun	Y
Senator Tim Mathern	Y

Motion passed 5-0-0

Senator Davison will carry the bill.

10:04 Chairman Dever closed the meeting.

Susan Huntington, Committee Clerk

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee Roughrider Room, State Capitol

SB 2215
2/10/2023

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of health and human services for recreation services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

11:41 AM Chairman Bekkedahl opened the meeting.

Members present: **Senators Bekkedahl, Krebsbach, Burckhard, Davison, Dever, Dwyer, Kreun, Meyer, Roers, Schaible, Sorvaag, Vedaa, Wanzek, Rust, and Mathern.**

Members Absent: **Senator Erbele**

Discussion Topics:

- Committee action

11:41 AM Senator Davison introduced the bill verbally.

11:42 AM Senator Davison moved DO PASS

11:42 AM Senator Kreun seconded.

11:43 AM Roll call vote.

Senators	Vote
Senator Brad Bekkedahl	Y
Senator Karen K. Krebsbach	Y
Senator Randy A. Burckhard	Y
Senator Kyle Davison	Y
Senator Dick Dever	Y
Senator Michael Dwyer	Y
Senator Robert Erbele	A
Senator Curt Kreun	Y
Senator Tim Mathern	Y
Senator Scott Meyer	Y
Senator Jim P. Roers	Y
Senator Donald Schaible	Y
Senator Ronald Sorvaag	Y
Senator Shawn Vedaa	Y
Senator Terry M. Wanzek	Y
Senator Rust	Y

Passed 15-0-1

Senator Davison will carry the bill.

11:46 AM Senator Bekkedahl closed the meeting.

Peter Gualandri on behalf of Kathleen Hall, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2215: Appropriations Committee (Sen. Bekkedahl, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (15 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2215 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

2023 HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES

SB 2215

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

SB 2215
3/8/2023

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of health and human services for recreation services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Chairman Weisz called the meeting to order at 9:06 AM.

Chairman Robin Weisz, Reps. Karen A. Anderson, Mike Beltz, Clayton Fegley, Kathy Frelich, Dawson Holle, Dwight Kiefert, Carrie McLeod, Todd Porter, Brandon Prichard, Karen M. Rohr, Jayme Davis, and Gretchen Dobervich present. Vice Chairman Matthew Ruby not present.

Discussion Topics:

- Traditional services
- Historical marginalization

Sen. Lemm introduced SB 2215, speaking in support.

Phyllis Briss, Program Director of the Activity Center for the Red River Human Services Foundation, in Fargo, North Dakota, supportive testimony (#22939).

Carla Tice, Program Director at the Drop-In Center in Grand Forks, North Dakota, supportive testimony (#26870).

Chairman Weisz adjourned the meeting at 9:31 AM.

Phillip Jacobs, Committee Clerk

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

SB 2215
3/20/2023

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of health and human services for recreation services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Chairman Weisz called the meeting to order at 3:44 PM.

Chairman Robin Weisz, Reps. Karen A. Anderson, Mike Beltz, Clayton Fegley, Kathy Frelich, Dawson Holle, Dwight Kiefert, Carrie McLeod, Todd Porter, Brandon Prichard, Karen M. Rohr, and Gretchen Dobervich present. Vice Chairman Matthew Ruby and Rep. Jayme Davis not present.

Discussion Topics:

- Committee work

Chairman Weisz called for a discussion on SB 2215.

Rep. Porter moved a do not pass on SB 2215.

Seconded by Vice Chairman Ruby.

Roll Call Vote:

Representatives	Vote
Representative Robin Weisz	Y
Representative Matthew Ruby	Y
Representative Karen A. Anderson	Y
Representative Mike Beltz	N
Representative Jayme Davis	AB
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	N
Representative Clayton Fegley	N
Representative Kathy Frelich	Y
Representative Dawson Holle	Y
Representative Dwight Kiefert	Y
Representative Carrie McLeod	Y
Representative Todd Porter	Y
Representative Brandon Prichard	Y
Representative Karen M. Rohr	Y

Motion carries 9-3-2.

Carried by Vice Chairman Ruby.

Chairman Weisz adjourned the meeting at 3:46 PM.

Phillip Jacobs, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2215: Human Services Committee (Rep. Weisz, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (9 YEAS, 3 NAYS, 2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2215 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.

TESTIMONY

SB 2215

TESTIMONY SB 2215
Human Services Committee
January 23, 2023

Chair Judy Lee and members of Senate Human Services Committee, my name is Tom Newberger and I am the Director for Red River Human Services Foundation in Fargo and Wahpeton, ND. Our agency supports approximately 525 people with developmental disabilities in Residential, Day and Social programs. The focus of my testimony today is related to the latter – Social programs.

Red River Human Services Foundation operates the Activity Center in Fargo. The Activity Center has been operating since the late 1970's and has filled a void for services to people with disabilities. People with disabilities go to the Activity Center to recreate, socialize and to find a place where they can receive services that are not always available to them through Provider's residential and day programs. I have been in this business for nearly 37 years and I have seen where our traditional services come up short and are not able to give people the choices they want. This is where the Activity Center in Fargo and the LISTEN CENTER in Grand Forks plays a vital role.

The Activity Center adds meanings to people's lives by being a common place where people come together to learn and develop social skills, friendships and how to access the community. It also acts as a safety net when other support systems have failed. For example, many winters ago, a member of the Activity Center called and said she had been sick to her stomach for 3 days and was out of toilet paper, medicine and nearly out of food. Our staff went to her apartment, bought her the items she lacked and possibly saved her life. While this is an extreme example, it shows what we do for the less fortunate.

More common activities provided by us include going camping, to ball games and to parks. These activities add meaning to people's lives by getting them involved, rather than sitting in a group home that is not staffed adequately. We have 7 group homes in Fargo/West Fargo for a total of 35 people. Each home usually has 1-2 DSP's in the evenings and it's not possible for the staff to take someone to the park, drop them off, take another person to a movie and work with 3 people at home at the same time. This again is where the Activity Center fills a void by providing staff for other DD providers too who are short-staffed.

Senator Lee
Senate Bill 2215
Page 2 - DD Funding

The story of the Activity Center and Listen Center is a long and winding road due to funding constraints. The Activity Center has nearly closed many times, such as when Lutheran Social Services ran the program and many times almost eliminated the program because of the financial drain. The Activity Center was picked up by Red River Human Services Foundation in 2001 and currently we lose \$80,000-\$100,000 per year operating it. We operated without State funds until 2013, when the Legislature approved \$150,000 per Biennium for the two DD providers or \$37,500 per year per provider. This is why I am asking for your support to increase the funding by \$150,000 per Biennium, which will give the two providers \$75,000 per year. I would also really appreciate if you could add an annual inflationary increase to the Bill to help us with annual inflationary increases. Please support the Activity Center and the LISTEN Center by increasing the total Biennial funding from \$150,000 per Biennium to \$300,000 per Biennium. Again, an inflationary increase would be very helpful too. Thank you and I'll be happy to answer any questions.

Good morning.

For the record I am Senator Randy Lemm from District 20, Hillsboro and I am also on the board of directors for the RRHS foundation

I am here to introduce Senate bill 2215 and we are seeking an appropriation of \$300,000

There are 2 activity centers for people with Intellectual Disabilities, 1 located in Fargo and operated by Red River Human Services and the other in Grand Forks operated by *LISTEN*

The 2 centers are currently receiving \$150,000 per biennium split between the 2 to help with activities such as cooking, safety and gathering with others to socialize, play games and get some exercise. This appropriation was started about ¹⁰~~8~~ years ago ^{in 2013}. We are looking to increase this amount to \$300,000 per biennium which would amount to \$75,000 per year to each of the 2 centers.

Red River Human Services is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to help Intellectually disabled individuals with life skills such as cooking and cleaning, safety and generally caring for themselves.

They help provide food and medicine.

In the last year they lost about \$60,000 in funding from United Way when United Way shifted their focus from the Intellectually Disabled to suicide prevention.

There are currently about 425 people in the activity center program.

TESTIMONY SB 2215
Senate Appropriations – Human Resources Division
February 8, 2023

Good morning Mr. Chairman, Dick Dever and members of Senate Appropriations Human Resources Division. For the record, my name is Tom Newberger and I am the Executive Director for Red River Human Services Foundation in Fargo and Wahpeton, ND. Our agency supports approximately 525 people with developmental disabilities in Residential, Day and Social programs. The focus of my testimony today is related to the latter – Social programs.

I am here today to ask you for support of Senate Bill 2215 that partially supports only two Providers in the State who continue to lose funds every year. The two Development Disability providers are Red River Human Services Foundation (RRHSF) in Fargo and LISTEN in Grand Forks. RRHSF operates the Activity Center and the Activity Center opened originally in the late 1970's by Lutheran Social Services because they provide many needed services that other DD Providers are not able to do for people with disabilities. People with disabilities go to the Activity Center to recreate, socialize and to find a place where they can receive services that gives them a better life. I have been in this business for nearly 37 years and I have seen where our traditional DD services come up short and are not able to give people the choices they need or want. This is where the Activity Center in Fargo and the LISTEN Center in Grand Forks plays a vital role.

The Activity Center adds meanings to people's lives by being a common place where people come together to learn and develop social skills, friendships and how to access the community. It also acts as a safety net when other support systems have failed. For example, many winters ago, a member of the Activity Center called and said she had been sick to her stomach for 3 days and was out of toilet paper, medicine and nearly out of food. Our Activity Center staff went to her apartment, bought her the items she lacked and possibly saved her life. While this is an extreme example, it shows what we do for the less fortunate.

More common activities provided by us include going camping, to ball games, such as the Minnesota Twins who give us free tickets and to parks. These activities add meaning to people's lives by getting them involved, rather than sitting in a group home that is not staffed adequately. We have 7 group homes in Fargo/West Fargo for a total of 35 people. Each home usually has 1-2 Direct Support Professionals (DSP's) in the evenings and it's not possible for the staff to take someone to the park, drop them off, take another

Senator Dick Dever
Senate Bill 2215
Page 2 - DD Funding
February 8, 2023

person to a movie and work with 3 people at home at the same time. This again is where the Activity Center fills a void by providing staff for other DD providers too who are short-staffed.

The story of the Activity Center and LISTEN Center is a long and winding road due to funding constraints. The Activity Center has nearly closed many times, such as when Lutheran Social Services ran the program and many times almost eliminated the program because of the financial drain. The Activity Center was picked up by Red River Human Services Foundation in 2001 and currently we lose \$80,000-\$100,000 per year operating it. We operated without State funds until 2013, when the Legislature approved \$150,000 per Biennium for the two DD providers or \$37,500 per year per provider. This is why I am asking for your support to increase the funding by \$150,000 per Biennium, which will give the two providers \$75,000 per year. I would also really appreciate if you could add an annual inflationary increase to the Bill to help us with annual inflationary increases. Please support the Activity Center and the LISTEN Center by increasing the total Biennial funding from \$150,000 per Biennium to \$300,000 per Biennium. This is a small amount compared to other requests you receive, but it will keep us up and running our programs to support people with disabilities immensely. Again, an inflationary increase would be very helpful too. Thank you and I'll be happy to answer any questions.

TESTIMONY HB 2215
House Appropriations - Human Services Committee
March 8, 2023

Good morning Mr. Chairman, Robin Weisz and members of the House of Human Services Committee. My name is Phyllis Briss, and I am the Program Director of the Activity Center, a program of Red River Human Services Foundation in Fargo, ND. Our agency supports people with developmental disabilities in Residential, Day and Social programs. The focus of my testimony today is related to the latter- Social programs.

I am here today to ask you for support of Senate Bill 2215 that partially supports two providers in the state who continue to lose funds every year. The only two Developmental Disability (DD) providers who offer recreational opportunities are Red River Human Services Foundation (RRHSF) in Fargo and LISTEN in Grand Forks. RRHSF operates the Activity Center. The Activity Center was opened in the early 1970's by Lutheran Social Services in order to fill a gap by offering social and leisure services that other DD providers were unable to provide. We serve 400 people with disabilities from the Fargo-Moorhead and surrounding areas. It is a safe place where they can go to meet new friends, join in recreational activities and receive services that give them a better quality of life. I have worked with this program for 36 years and have seen where our traditional services come up short and are not always able to give people the choices they need or want. This is where programs such as the Activity Center in Fargo and the LISTEN Center in Grand Forks play a vital role.

The Activity Center adds meaning to peoples' lives. It is a welcoming place where people come together to learn and develop social skill, friendships and how to access the community. It also acts as a safety net when other support systems have failed. For example, many winters ago, a senior member of the Activity Center called and said she was very sick. She did not have a provider she could call, and had no family. She felt she needed to go to the clinic, but was out of money for a cab, food, and paper supplies. Staff from the Activity Center took her into the emergency room where she received medication. They also brought her food and paper supplies to last until her social security check came. They continued to check on her until she was past the worst of her illness. Given this person's age, it was quite possible that they saved her life.

Daily activities may include sporting and community events, card games, cooking classes and weekly ceramic classes. We also provide special opportunities that most would not be able to do on their own such as camping, a trip to the Minnesota Twins game and the opportunity to participate in a yearly Christmas play. These activities add meaning to peoples' lives by getting them involved, rather than sitting in a group home that is not adequately staffed. We have 7 group homes in Fargo/West Fargo for a total of 35 people. Each home usually has 1-2 Direct Support Professionals (DSP's) in the evenings and it's not possible for the staff to take one person to the park, drop them off, take another person to a movie and work with 3 people at home at the same time. This again is where the Activity Center fills a void for DD providers who are short-staffed.

The story of the Activity Center and LISTEN Center is a long and winding road due to funding constraints. The Activity Center has nearly closed many times, such as when Lutheran Social Services of ND ran the program and many times almost eliminated it because of the financial drain. The Activity Center was picked up by Red River Human Services Foundation in 2001 and currently we lose \$80,000-\$100,000 per year operating it. We operated without state funds until 2013, when the Legislature approved \$150,000 per biennium for the two DD providers, or \$37,500 per year per provider. This is why I am asking for

your support to increase the funding by \$150,000 per biennium, which will give the two providers \$75,000 per year. I would also really appreciate if you could add an annual inflationary increase to Bill 2215 to help us with annual inflationary increases. Please support the Activity Center and the LISTEN Center by increasing the total biennial funding from \$150,000 per biennium. This is a small amount compared to many other requests you receive, but it will keep us up and running our programs to support people with disabilities immensely. Again, an inflationary increase would be very helpful too. Thank you and I will be happy to answer any questions.

Testimony

Senate Bill 2215

House Appropriations- Human Service Committee

March 8th, 2023

Good morning and thank you for this opportunity, Chairman, Robin Weisz and members of the Human Service Committee.

My name is Carla Tice and I am the Program Director at the Listen Drop-In Center in Grand Forks. I am here today in support of Senate Bill 2215.

A Bill to help fund recreation and leisure activities for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Have you ever thought of a time when you have felt so blessed to have a nice vehicle to get you to and from where you are going. It will take you there safely, it will be wonderfully comfortable. It will be fuel efficient, and even have the best stereo system around. It even has room for many of your friends or family to go with. The Listen Drop-In and the Fargo Activity Centers are these vehicles for people with disabilities. The Leisure- Recreation offered takes them safely to places they never thought they would be, a summer night at the Ulland Softball diamond, playing on a men's or coed softball team side by side with everyone else in our community- batter up, because maybe are record reflects 8-2, but it is a win, win for everyone as without Listen's support our guys and gals wouldn't be out playing in this inclusive setting and given choice on what recreational activities that fulfill their needs. This goes the same for our support of individuals with disabilities being on regular bowling leagues. I'm out for coffee with one of the people we support, it is, "Hi Roberta, from many people and I say how do you know all these people and she replies I met them at bowling. Friday night dances bring over 100 people - dancing, socializing, having a bite to eat, a feeling like you belong and you can unwind after a long week. Dancing slow with the one, even when it is a fast song. The vehicle, leisure recreation brings over 900 people in Grand Forks with 15,000 plus visits a year to a place of confidence, self-esteem, friendships, new experiences and a better quality of life. A Performing Arts Production fills up the local theater Empire. People with disabilities who fall in the cracks, they have us. People who are short staffed they have us. People who need friends, they have us. People who need an affordable place to go to laugh, love and grow. We are here. For 25 years I am humbled to be part of such a great place, that does so many good things for so many good people in our state. We have made a difference for our fellow citizens and we thank you for your part in this. We are asking for the ~~\$17,000~~ ^{\$150,000} per year for each center. We need to give people who have historically marginalized the ride of their life to a place where we can support them to find their purpose and see that we all have gifts to be respected without conditions. We do that at Listen and the Red River Community foundation, Activity Center.

Thank-you.