

**2023 HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES**

**HB 1468**

# 2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

HB 1468  
1/25/2023

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of health and human services for mental health awareness services.
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Chairman Weisz called the meeting to order at 10:47AM.

Chairman Robin Weisz, Vice Chairman Matthew Ruby, Reps. Karen A. Anderson, Mike Beltz, Clayton Fegley, Kathy Frelich, Dawson Holle, Dwight Kiefert, Carrie McLeod, Todd Porter, Brandon Prichard, Karen M. Rohr, and Jayme Davis present. Rep. Gretchen Dobervich virtually present.

### **Discussion Topics:**

- Diversity of voters
- Mental health
- Importance of mental health awareness
- Funding process
- Individuals apathetic to help

Representative Dakane District 10 introduced HB 1468 with supportive testimony #16720

Karl Young, Executive Director of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum (FASD) in North Dakota, offered testimony in support of bill # 16728

### **Additional written testimony:**

Kari Breker, ND Resident #15513  
Terri Hedman, RN #15824  
Jacqueline Beller, #16430

Chairman Weisz adjourned the meeting at 11:04 AM.

*Phillip Jacobs, Committee Clerk*

# 2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

HB 1468  
2/6/2023

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of health and human services for mental health awareness services.

Chairman Weisz called the meeting to order at 4:26 PM.

Chairman Robin Weisz, Vice Chairman Matthew Ruby, Reps. Karen A. Anderson, Mike Beltz, Clayton Fegley, Kathy Frelich, Dawson Holle, Dwight Kiefert, Carrie McLeod, Todd Porter, Brandon Prichard, Karen M. Rohr, and Jayme Davis present. Rep. Gretchen Dobervich virtually present.

### Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action

Representative Beltz moved a DO NOT PASS on HB 1468.

Representative Prichard seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Representatives	Vote
Representative Robin Weisz	Y
Representative Matthew Ruby	Y
Representative Karen A. Anderson	Y
Representative Mike Beltz	Y
Representative Jayme Davis	N
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	N
Representative Clayton Fegley	Y
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 carried 12-2-0.

Representative Holle carrier.

Chairman Weisz adjourned the meeting at 4:29 PM.

*Phillip Jacobs, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**HB 1468: Human Services Committee (Rep. Weisz, Chairman)** recommends **DO NOT PASS** (12 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1468 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

**TESTIMONY**

**HB 1468**

As a North Dakota resident, I urge you to support HB1468.

In North Dakota, suicide is the leading cause of death in ages 10-24 and second leading cause of death for ages 25-34 according to a 2020 report from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Additionally, we also know that mental illness is an issue that many people of all ages struggle with and that accessibility to services is very challenging for so many communities across the state. Addressing this issue should be a top priority and by passing HB1468 and appropriating extra money to Mental Health Awareness efforts, would be a step in the right direction.

I urge you to vote in support of HB1468, a bipartisan bill.

Kari Breker

Re: HOUSE BILL NO. 1468

Dear Representatives:

I am writing in **support of HB 1468**. As a registered nurse, I applaud any action that can potentially minimize gun violence while rendering mental health support for North Dakota citizens. The victims of mental illness and of gun violence are multiplied when you factor in those that love and care for them. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,  
Terri Hedman, MSSL, BSN, RN, OCN  
5524 16 Street South  
Fargo, ND 58104

**HB1468 – Testimony in Support Of**

Dear Representatives,

I am writing in support of HB1468. Mental health support is vital for the wellbeing of North Dakota's citizens. Having lost a friend and another family member (by marriage) to suicide in the last month, it has become even more evident to me that programs are desperately needed. Awareness of services and access to them is so important to prevent the destruction of lives - please pass this bill.

Thank you!

Jackie Beller

Moms demand Action for Gun Sense in America – FM – Treasurer



**Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee.**

My name is Hamida Dakane, I am a representative from District 10 in South Fargo.

House Bill 1468 was introduced on behalf of constituents.

Today I am speaking in favor of expanded funding for mental health through the bill before you.

During last summer and fall I was able to talk with thousands of residents of district 10, and one issue that came up time and time again was mental health. They asked all of us to help improve the state of mental healthcare in North Dakota. The people of North Dakota are recognizing that good mental health is vital to a good life, and that the care is either too expensive, too difficult to access because of availability, and often it is stigmatized as well.

While I was talking to voters, I noticed something surprising. They were all quite different people by any metric. Different ages, genders, races, religions. However, the stories were the same. North Dakotans are struggling with mental health issues of their own, of members of their family, or members of their community. Mental health isn't something we're born with the ability to fully manage on our own. We can handle some of it some of the time, and we can handle more when our parents and communities guide our development as good citizens. However, for most people there will come a time, or times when that just isn't enough.

Mental health is vitally important from birth to death. Young children need to learn to manage their emotions and thoughts so that they can function among friends, in classrooms, and around adults and authority figures.

Older children need to learn how to manage their focus so that they can learn increasingly difficult concepts in school and excel at sports and other extracurricular activities.

Older teens and young adults need to understand how to relate to potential romantic partners, co-workers, and bosses.

Active-duty military and veterans need to be able to manage the effects of difficult experiences and sometimes the impacts of physical injuries from their service, and we all need to learn how to manage the impacts of traumatic events in our lives. Children dealing with the impacts of divorce or tensions between adults in their

lives, and adults dealing with the impacts of negative feelings and impacts from their lives from childhood to adulthood.

Finally, for the people and families who struggle with mental health issues, they need to work through all the normal challenges of life with one more thing making it harder. Whether that's a small issue like the weight of a feather, or a huge issue like carrying hundreds of pounds on your back everywhere you go.

Our work here can help reduce the stigma around improving and seeking help to improve mental health. This is vitally important. How does one become a good man, a good woman, or a good citizen without strong mental health? It is impossible. The bill before you will ensure that awareness, access, availability, and affordability are also not a concern.

Besides helping our fellow citizens manage their health in a way that will make them stronger and better members of our communities, this bill will also help communities and individuals learn about the warning signs associated with very disruptive mental health issues. The tragic stories we hear all too often in our communities, stories of people harming their families, their communities, or themselves. We have the power to ensure that mental health is not a barrier for our fellow citizens. Not a barrier to being a strong community member, not a barrier to being a great family member, and not a barrier to being a successful provider for ourselves and our families.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I would answer any questions that I can. Thank you.

January 25, 2023

House Human Services Committee

Chair Representative Weisz

Chair Weisz, members of the committee, good morning, my name is Carl Young. I am the Executive Director of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum (FASD) – North Dakota. Formerly known as Family Services Network, Inc. We are a non-profit dedicated to supporting those who are born substance exposed to drugs and alcohol, as well as their families. Those affected by drugs and alcohol in the womb didn't ask for their prognosis. Most are diagnosed with multiple mental health issues prior to getting a diagnosis of FASD.

I am also a parent of a young adult who was diagnosed from the age of three with several mental health issues. In fact, from the age of five, he was on adult doses of most of his medications.

Today, I am here to give you an example of some of the things our family struggled with.

**Acceptance.** Not just in our home that one of our kids had severe mental illness, but in our community. Our schools. And sometimes, in the professional community that was supposed to be helping treat him.

**Preservation.** We adopted our son when he was two years old. In our case, it was a foster-care to adopt situation. While we knew that he had been born substance exposed, we didn't know about the alcohol which is far more damaging to the developing embryo than any drug. We didn't expect the child we love to stay awake for 72 hours at a time. We didn't expect the level of violence and other issues that came from the mental illness. When we sought help, we had to go through the a labyrinth of channels to get the support he needed, and even then it was mixed, spotty and often ineffective.

**Family Support.** Many of the members of our family outside of our household didn't understand what our family was going through. They thought that we should just give him back to the state of North Dakota. How do you give back your child? When the time came for us to seek treatment in one of our states Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities we adamantly refused to give up custody. What would giving up custody of our son tell him?

**Stigma.** Let me tell you about stigma, it's something I face daily in my work. People with severe mental illness have symptoms. Symptoms can include a lot of things that appear to be behaviors. Most often these symptoms are a response to external stimulation of an underlying condition and an unconscious response to that stimulation. I am not a psychologist, a doctor or anything like that. What I am is a parent with lived experience. A peer support person.

Our son was on adult doses of most of his psychotropic medications when he was five years old. Because of the way his body metabolizes medication, we had to frequently change his medication. We sought care across two states for him. Because of the process involved in getting care, one agency "cured" him 4 times.

I speak of stigma. The stigma of knowing your child, in a moment of intense psychological pain, wants and is seeking to kill you. And as a father, knowing that no matter how much you desire to repair him, there is little that you can do. So you sacrifice your own health, your own mental well-being for theirs. I speak of the shame of bearing that stigma as a family. Knowing that people in your community are

talking about your family behind your back. About the bizarre way your child acts, the frequent calls to 911. The investigations by Children and Family Services.

So, I am here in support of HB1468. Mental Health Awareness will go a long way toward helping the community of families be able to cope with life by generating awareness of how significant mental health is in our world.

I leave you with this thought.

The city of Mandan has roughly 25000 people in the main part of the city. At least according to population reports. That's roughly the number of people in our state who are diagnosed with mental illness of any kind.

How many are undiagnosed in part because of the stigma attached to mental illness?

What illness carries the same stigma as mental illness?