

House Bill 1441

Written Testimony for Support

To Legislative Members

My name is Jami Schwab. I am speech-language pathologist and own a new therapy clinic in Bismarck, Milestones Therapy. We are currently a small practice of 6 therapists. I am also mother of 4, two being adult children and two small children.

I have been in the work force for 27 years and have worked with people from all economic backgrounds and family situations. The decision to give up a job to take care of a family situation is personally familiar as well as familiar from a friend or co-worker point of view.

I watched my own child suffer through the loss of a close friend to suicide and it devastated me as a parent. I have become so passionate and concerned about the mental health of every person and it starts at birth. Not only does it start at birth, but it develops and changes over an entire lifetime. A state of person's mental health has an enormous impact on their functioning as it relates to the caregiving of their family and in their job positions. The stress of choosing between a job and a major life event can have a major impact on how the worker does the job if they stay and how they take care of their family in a time of need whether they stay or leave.

I am so passionate about parents, especially mothers, having adequate maternity leave to bond with their new babies. This goes back to my desire for better mental health development for all people. This is a crucial stage for both the mother and child. I feel all new mothers should be able to take at least 12, but preferably 16 weeks or more of leave after welcoming a new baby whether that by natural birth or adoption. I have been concerned how a small business like myself could afford to give paid maternity leaves that I believe are so important. House Bill 1441 is a brilliant plan to move this state and lead our country into what many other developed countries are already doing. It addresses the concerns of small businesses ability to afford it and extends to independent contractors. It also addresses other life events that have significant importance in the lives of our citizens.

I would likely offer this as a benefit at my workplace as fully paid by the company. I fully support House Bill 1441 and am pleased to see legislators putting forth a bill that benefits all citizens of this state.

Jami Schwab

Milestones Therapy