

**Testimony — HCR 3013**  
**March 10, 2021 — Senate Industry, Business, and Labor Committee**

Chairman Klein and members of the Senate Industry Business and Labor Committee:

For the record, my name is Claire Cory and I represent District 42 in Grand Forks, North Dakota. My little district alone has a handful of businesses including RDO, hotels, restaurants such as Red Pepper, banks, and the two newest are Below Zero Nutrition and Cole Paper. I figured there isn't a better time to study employment restrictions in public assistance programs with the new changes in federal benefits and new to our state, CARES act benefits.

The goal of this bill is to study the challenges for business development regarding pay and worker shortages in North Dakota. To study if workforce shortage issues can be resolved by allowing employees to work additional hours. To study if public assistance programs restrict eligibility based on total number of hours worked. To study employment and benefits impacted due to COVID-19. And to study if, working more hours, while allowing employees to stay on benefits, will help businesses in their development.

What happens is somebody may be on a public assistance program be it for housing or fuel assistance maybe it's just general welfare whatever it may be and they are getting to a point where they are at an income threshold where they can't work any more hours or make anymore money because they'd get their public assistance taken away. These employees want to work more hours or they should be working more hours but because of the way our programs work its creating a disincentive for people to take more responsibility. Or perhaps it's creating a scenario where people want more responsibility but they can't because of what the programs are doing.

Some of you may have seen this bill before as it has been introduced in similar forms in previous sessions. It is pertinent to keep an eye on this issue no matter how often we've looked at it. As we saw an increase of public assistance programs during the pandemic it is an appropriate time for this study to discover the effects on businesses but also on employees.

I urge you to vote for a do pass to create a better work environment for North Dakota employers and employees. And I will answer any questions you may have.

Claire Cory—District 42