

HB 1012
January 27th, 2009
Human Resources Division of House Appropriations

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Valerie Koivunen and I live in District 27 in Fargo. I would like to inform you of my support for increased funding for the Mental Health Extended Services program under HB1012. I am a job coach, but also a mother of a daughter who receives Extended Services for her mental health issues.

I would like to tell you about some of the people that I provide supports to. Not only do they need their jobs for income, but also for social interaction and community inclusion as well. Many of our people would suffer from isolation, loss of self-esteem and self-confidence if they did not have meaningful and constructive work. Extended Services keeps people with mental health problems out of the State Hospital, out of nursing homes and incarceration. This is because like the rest of us, their identity is tied to the work they do and the pride they have in earning a paycheck for a job well done.

On a personal level, I know my daughter would be insecure, angry and withdrawn without the employment supports she receives. She appreciates the interaction of her co-workers and the feedback from her job coach.

I appreciate your time and attention on this matter.

Thank you,



Valerie Koivunen
1103 43 ½ St SW #106
Fargo, ND 58103