

Testimony on SF 1173- In Favor

Senate Health and Human Services Committee
March 4, 2025

Good morning, Chairperson Wiklund and members of the committee,

My name is Madison Hanson, and I am here today as a concerned citizen and mental health advocate from North Dakota to voice my strong support for SF 1173. While I do not currently reside in Minnesota, I grew up here, have the majority of my family in this state, and attend graduate school here for social work. I stand before you because the barriers this bill seeks to remove do not stop at state lines. Mental illness does not recognize borders, and neither should access to treatment.

This legislation addresses a critical gap by allowing individuals on probation or parole to receive essential mental health services across state lines. As a member of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) North Dakota, I am well aware of how restrictions on mental health care access create unnecessary hardships, not just for individuals seeking recovery, but for the entire justice system, communities, and families.

Under the current system, individuals on probation or parole are often denied access to essential mental health care simply because of where they live, forcing them into an impossible situation that increases their risk of reoffending, relapse, or crisis. We know that access to consistent, high-quality mental health care reduces recidivism, improves long-term stability, and ultimately saves taxpayer dollars by decreasing reliance on emergency services, jails, and hospitals. SF 1173 removes a counterproductive barrier, ensuring that people receive the care they need when and where they need it most.

Furthermore, as someone actively working on similar legislation in North Dakota, I urge you to see this bill as an opportunity to set a precedent. If Minnesota takes this step forward, it sends a powerful message, not just to neighboring states like mine, but across the country, that mental health treatment should never be obstructed by geography.

I respectfully ask this committee to vote yes on SF 1173. This is more than a policy adjustment, it is a lifeline for those seeking to rebuild their lives. Thank you for your time and your leadership on this critical issue.

Madison Hanson
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NAMI ND Member