

Testimony
Senate Bill 2066 – Department of Human Services
House Human Services Committee
Representative Price, Chairman
February 21, 2007

Chairman Price and members of the House Human Services Committee, my name is Paul Ronningen, Director, Children and Family Services with the Department of Human Services. I am here today to present testimony regarding Senate Bill 2066. The Department supports the passage of this bill.

This bill was introduced to eliminate the sunset clause on the moratorium as found on lines 8 and 19. The moratorium was placed on the expansion of residential bed capacity, which was set at the number of beds licensed as of June 30, 2003. (See [Attachment A](#) for a listing of the current Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF), formerly know as Residential Treatment Centers and [Attachment B](#) for a listing of the current Residential Child Care Facilities (RCCF) and their licensed bed capacity.)

The moratoriums were originally passed by the 2001 Legislative Assembly. The moratorium were primarily due to the facility in Mandan, Southwest Keys, who operated in North Dakota from 11/10/97 through 6/30/2000 and provided 40 RCCF and RTC beds. They vacated these beds with a month's notice and left agencies, families and children scrambling for alternative service locations.

In order to address the service needs of some youth who are leaving the state for residential treatment services, the North Dakota Department of Human Services has issued a RFP (Request for Proposals) for treatment

services for adolescent sexual offenders. The deadline for responding to this request is February 28, 2007. As of November 2006, there are 51 youth in residential treatment services.

The Senate also added new language on lines 13-16, which allows for the development of new psychiatric residential treatment facility beds for adolescents who are residents of other states. PRTF beds added under this new language would not impact the Department's budget. I am proposing an amendment to this section, which will use the new title for these facilities, psychiatric residential treatment facility as opposed to residential treatment facility (See Attachment C).

I have also attached a chart titled Child Welfare Data Snapshot (Attachment D), which illustrates the trend line for foster care placements in the state of North Dakota. The chart shows that foster care placements have increased overall by 11.7% since FFY (Federal Fiscal Year) 2000. However, the percentage of youth placed in residential care has dropped by 11.6% while the number of children placed with their extended families has gone up by 140.1%.

This concludes my formal testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have. Thank you.