

Testimony, Department of Human Services
Senate Bill 2301
Senate Government and Veterans Affairs
Senator Dick Dever, Chairman

Senator Dever and members of the Government and Veterans Affairs committee, I am JoAnne Hoesel, with the Department of Human Services (DHS). I also serve as chairman for the Governor's Prevention and Advisory Council. I am here today to make you aware of concerns regarding Senate Bill 2301.

The Governor's Prevention and Advisory Council (the council) was created by 2007 Senate Bill 2276. Its scope was further refined by Executive Order 2007-03. ([Attachment A](#)) The members of the council are identified in [Attachment B](#).

For the 2011-2013 biennium, the Department of Human Services (Department), received an appropriation to provide up to \$250,000 in federal funds as dollar for dollar match for every dollar (in-kind or cash) that Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) documented raising. It appears the language used in 2011 Senate Bill 2012, the Department's appropriation is being proposed as an amendment in 2013 Senate Bill 2301.

I am here to share with you what the Department believes to be the unintended consequences of the proposed change. This language proposed as an amendment to NDCC section 54-07-07, changes the council's focus beyond alcohol and drug use and abuse. This expanded scope and limited funding will dilute the council's impact. If we expand its scope it loses focus. The Council has developed into a council with exceptional knowledge, expertise, and experience to develop effective substance abuse prevention

efforts. Adding diversity to its duties will not allow it to continue to build off its current successes; rather it'll dilute its efforts. Rather than having one focus with exceptional results, we'll have multiple items of focus with mediocre results.

There already exist state councils and committees for traffic safety, suicide, and other traffic issues. This council is the **only** cross-agency state council focusing on substance abuse prevention and related consequences. The proposed language further redirects the focus to that solely of a statewide network. An invaluable component of the work the council does, and an extremely effective prevention tool is awarding grants for evidence-based community-based efforts. The proposed language appears to restrict the council from one of its most effective prevention tools of awarding grants for specific community-driven activities. In addition, if the proposed language is enacted, the \$100,000 appropriation included in the Department's 2013-2015 budget proposal would be required to be used to only for statewide networks.

The council has regularly met, has developed a website, has issued funds to communities for evidence-based prevention activities, and through enhanced collaboration with other state and local agency prevention efforts tied to substance abuse and related consequences, has developed an award-winning parent and professional resource site, called 'Parents Lead'. Most importantly, the council has reduced duplication of prevention efforts, increased cross-agency collaboration, and heightened the awareness of effective prevention practices. The council serves as the advisory council to the DHS strategic prevention framework grant which will provide funding to communities for effective prevention strategies tied to specific community issues and challenges.

Changing the council's focus beyond alcohol and drugs and related consequences and restricting the council's ability to support specific community-driven efforts, is detrimental to its mission and to communities who strive to implement effective prevention activities.

I am available to answer your questions.

