

Testimony
Senate Bill 2069 - Department of Human Services
Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee
Senator Dever, Chairman
January 10, 2013

Chairman Dever, members of the Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee, I am Alex C. Schweitzer, Director of Field Services for the Department of Human Services. I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 2069, introduced at the request of the Department of Human Services.

Senate Bill 2069 would direct the Legislative Council to change the name of the North Dakota Developmental Center at Westwood Park, Grafton, to the Life Skills and Transition Center.

The North Dakota Developmental Center (NDDC) provides residential, work and day activity, medical, clinical, and outreach services for individuals with intellectual disabilities at a campus located in Grafton, North Dakota.

The NDDC has seen significant changes in its population and mission over the past seven years. The NDDC, by legislative mandate, has transitioned individuals with intellectual disabilities from the residential center to the community. The adult population of the NDDC has been reduced from 143 to 85 since 2005. While the NDDC has carried out the mandate of transitioning adults with intellectual disabilities to appropriate community settings, the NDDC has also transformed its services.

The transformation process has changed the NDDC from strictly a residential center to a comprehensive provider of services for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The residential center continues to provide medical, health and behavioral services, specialized services for sex offending individuals, brief respite care services, and youth transition services. In addition, over the last five years, the NDDC has started to provide outreach services that support individuals in independent living arrangements, clinical and consultation services to support community providers and their clients, and by providing specialized community-based therapeutic services across the state.

The Department appears before you today to request your consideration of the name change of the NDDC to the "Life Skills and Transition Center" to better reflect the current mission of the NDDC. NDDC residents are no longer considered life-long residents, as life skills training, transformation and transition services provided by the employees of the NDDC, have enabled clients to be served in the community either by private providers or the NDDC.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions.