

Good afternoon chairman and members of the committee. I'm Yvonne Stiefel. I live in Pick City. I am here because I'm the parent of a young man with a disability. My son's name is Brad. Brad is 28 years old, living in an apartment in Bismarck. Brad and his roommate receive 27 hours a week of support staff. They assist Brad with budgeting, meal planning, cooking, shopping, numerous skills to help him be more independent. They also provide security, emotional support, a sense of family and friendship.

One of my biggest concerns is Brad having someone there constantly to meet Brad's needs. New staff is always being trained but they don't stay. Something has to change! I'm hoping that increasing the wages and having insurance benefits will give people the incentive to look at support services as a career. Having someone consistent in Brad's life would greatly enhance Brad's ability to become more independent.

Last week we had Brad's annual future plan meeting.

At that meeting Brad was informed that two of his support staff would be leaving. Brad was very upset. Just imagine if someone you care about, someone you depend on, someone that you see as a friend, a

family, member walks out of you life. The loss you would feel. That's what my son feels every time someone he has depended on leaves.

Please increase the funding so Brad can have what he needs to achieve as much independence as possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

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