

march 4, 2024

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Kandie Cleaves I reside in Garland. I am here today to testify in favor of **LD 2237. An Act to Strengthen Public Safety, Health and Well-being by Expanding Services and Coordinating Violence Prevention Resources**

This bill coincides well with the push to restore better access to mental health services that this administration has been working towards. While it would be nice to have people seek services early, often for a variety of reasons, people wait till they are in a crisis to finally seek help, some never do simply because they are afraid if they walk into a hospital no one will understand them, and they won't walk out. These crisis receiving centers can be that safe space, especially if most staff are peers. And for those who don't or can't make it to a Crisis receiving center, a mobile response unit making it to them can be the difference between life and death. The recent incident on Feb 14th in Minot that started out as domestic violence may have had a different outcome had a mobile crisis unit been available. Instead, a house was burned down, and a police officer shot.

As a person who grew up around guns, supports the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment, and is married to a man who served 18 yrs. in the military, I believe the gun shop project is a fantastic idea. Guns are a tool, not a toy, I was taught that by my dad and again in a gun safety course. The lack of knowledge about gun laws, safety measures and use has been causing a lot of grief and loss even in my own life. My son yrs. ago was accidentally shot in the hip by a friend; education would have made a difference; My cousin and her 12 yr. old son were murdered, in Pennsylvania by her 20 yr. old stepson, education of shop owners and laws may have prevented it; And on Dec. 23, 2023 my brother in law Aarron with more than twice the legal limit of alcohol, pot, and a barbiturate in his system took out the gun he had been scared into buying, had no training for and killed himself. Aarron hadn't been suicidal. He did, however, have a history of illegal drug addiction in the past. With better education for himself, and the gun shop he might still be with us.

Please vote in favor of LD 2237

Thank you for your time.

Kandie Cleaves