

Testimony
Senate Bill 2083
House Human Services Committee
Wednesday, March 6, 2013
North Dakota Department of Health

Good morning Chairman Weisz and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Myra Kosse, Director for the Division of Laboratory Services of the Environmental Health Section for the North Dakota Department of Health. I am here to provide support for Section 1 of SB 2083.

As background, the Department's Division of Laboratory Services – Chemistry Lab serves the role of Laboratory Response Network (LRN) Chemical Terrorism Laboratory for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As part of this role, Chemistry personnel may be testing human urine or blood samples for the presence of metals. This type of analysis would only be in response to an act of terrorism and not considered routine.

The issue is that in North Dakota all laboratory professionals testing human specimens for diagnosis or treatment of disease must be licensed. The Department of Health's Chemistry Lab personnel, who would be tasked to analyze for trace metals in human samples, are not license eligible as they do not meet the background and educational requirements.

To allow North Dakota to maintain chemical terrorism response testing by trained, experienced, professional chemists, an exemption from the license requirement is needed. This exemption would apply to only a limited number of chemists in the Department's Chemistry Laboratory, would only be exercised during proficiency testing and emergencies defined by the CDC, and would allow North Dakota to maintain the only LRN laboratory within the state of North Dakota.

This concludes my testimony. I am glad to answer any questions you may have.