

2015 Legislative Bill Descriptions for Voting Record:

1244 – Improve Paid Family Leave for state employees. There were a few bills introduced to improve state employees paid family leave. 1244 added adoption to the allowable reasons employees could use sick leave, mirroring the rules for birth of a child. Other bills increased the amount of sick leave employees could use for care of a family member, whether for birth or illness. This bill became the home for all those policies and ultimately passed with inclusion of adoption as well as an increase of allowable family leave to 6 weeks of earned sick time.

1291 – This bill was introduced to provide increased Medicaid eligibility for pregnant women. Current Medicaid coverage for pregnant women is 147% of poverty (an income of around \$22,000 per year). Raising it to 200% would have meant a pregnant woman could get Medicaid with an income of \$39,840, or more depending on family size. This change would have drastically improved health outcomes for many low-income women because they could more easily access affordable prenatal care. The bill failed in the House.

1294 – Prohibited employers from retaliating against employees who discuss their wages with others. This bill lends transparency in the workforce so that discriminatory pay can be exposed and eliminated. A woman is not able to address unequal pay if she is not aware of pay discrimination. This bill passed the House by a significant vote, but failed by a small margin in the Senate.

1295 – Similar to 1291, this bill increased Medicaid eligibility for family planning. Increasing family planning eligibility is a cost-effective and proven prevention program. Our state puts zero money into family planning and by defeating the bill they illustrated an unwillingness to even leverage federal funds for this important program.

1370 – Termed the Dense Breast Notification bill, this piece of legislation had a rocky road to passage. The bill required doctors to notify patients when a mammogram reveals dense breast tissue and encourage further screening. After hearings in committee, the bill would get unfavorable recommendations, but advocates would rally and pull out the votes needed to win. The bill ultimately passed and became law.

1410 – The Head Start Funding Bill started out as a \$5 million appropriations and in the end passed with only \$4,900. Not enough funding to cover a biennium's worth of pencils. The full passage of the bill indicates tacit support of Head Start, but there is not actual gains made for this very effective educational program for children in low-income homes.

1438 – This bill would have increased the tipped minimum wage from \$4.86/hour to \$5.25/hour, and increasing yearly until it matched the federal standard minimum wage. After a very contentious committee hearing, the bill failed in the House.

1463 – Passed nearly unanimously, the bill improved pregnancy discrimination laws in the state by requiring employers to provide reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers. This bill also garnered federal support and garnered an award to NDWN from the White House.

2151 – A granting program for Early Childhood Education program. What started as a \$6 million grant program, ultimately passed as a \$3 million grant program. It is the first step for our state in supporting early childhood education.

2220 – A funding bill to increase funding to the Housing Incentive Fund (HIF) to \$70 million. The bill failed, but there was a lot of discussion and negotiation on HIF during the final weeks of the session. The Legislature reauthorized the program, provided \$30 million in tax credits and \$5 million in cash from earnings of the Bank of North Dakota with another \$5 million if the bank reaches \$130 million in profits for 2015. If this benchmark is achieved by BND, the second \$5 million will be available for award in 2016. But 2220 did not pass.

2223 – This bill would have exempted clothing from sales tax, ending a regressive tax in the state. It would also level the playing fields for retailers who compete with neighboring states and the internet who do not charge sales tax on

clothing. The bill failed in the Senate.

2279 – Anti-Discrimination Bill. The bill added sexual orientation and gender identity to protected classes of the state housing and employment human rights laws. After a slim win in the Senate, the bill failed in the House despite tremendous public support.

2353 – This bill would have returned provisional ballots to our voting process, allowing voters to vote in the election if their ID is not sufficient. The Secretary of State would verify eligibility to vote before the vote is counted. The bill failed giving no options to vote for those rejected at the polls.