

**Fifty-sixth Legislative Assembly, State of North Dakota, begun in the  
Capitol in the City of Bismarck, on Tuesday, the fifth day of January,  
one thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine**

SENATE BILL NO. 2148  
(Judiciary Committee)  
(At the request of the Secretary of State)

AN ACT to create and enact a new section to chapter 16.1-08.1 and a new section to chapter 16.1-11 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to reporting requirements for political committees that organize and register according to federal law and deadlines for placing county and city measures on election ballots; and to amend and reenact sections 11-07-06, 16.1-05-03, 16.1-08.1-01, 16.1-08.1-02, 16.1-08.1-03, 16.1-08.1-03.2, subsection 3 of section 16.1-08.1-03.3, sections 16.1-08.1-06, 16.1-11-06, 16.1-11-11, 16.1-11-22, subsection 3 of section 16.1-13-22, sections 16.1-15-01, 16.1-15-19, and subsection 6 of section 16.1-16-01, relating to election of county commissioners, election worker training sessions, campaign contribution statements, the time for submitting nominating petitions or certificates of endorsement, the primary election ballot, and county canvassing boards and recount boards being authorized to stamp and initial absentee ballots.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

**SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 11-07-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**11-07-06. Petitions - Signers required - Submission of question to voters.** The board of county commissioners, upon receipt of a petition signed by at least ten percent of the qualified electors of the county as determined by the number of votes cast for the office of governor at the preceding general election, shall, in accordance with applicable provisions of title ~~46~~ 16.1, cause the question of whether commissioners shall be elected at large to be submitted to the qualified electors of the county at the next succeeding primary or general election. If approved by sixty percent of the qualified electors voting at such election, all county commissioner districts in ~~such the county shall~~ must be immediately dissolved, and thereafter as the term of office of each member of the board of county commissioners expires, ~~such the office shall~~ must be filled by an election at large.

**SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-05-03 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**16.1-05-03. Secretary of state and county auditors to distribute election information - County auditor to provide instruction.**

1. Not less than thirty days before any primary, general, or special election, the secretary of state shall provide an instruction manual approved by the attorney general, which in layman's terms presents in detail the responsibilities of each election official. The secretary of state shall forward sufficient copies of this manual to each county auditor who shall distribute the manuals to each member of all the election boards in the county.
2. Before each primary and general election, each county auditor or the auditor's designated representative shall conduct training sessions on election laws and election procedures for election officials in the county and may conduct training sessions before any special statewide or legislative district election. The session or sessions must be conducted at such place or places throughout the county as the county auditor determines to be necessary. Attendance at the session is mandatory for members of the election board and for poll clerks ~~unless the board of county commissioners determines that the poll clerks in that county may not attend~~. The county auditor shall notify the members of the election boards, poll clerks ~~if applicable~~, and the state's attorney of the time and place of the session. The state's attorney shall attend all sessions to give advice on election laws. The

county auditor shall invite the district chairman in that county representing any political party casting at least five percent of the total votes cast for governor at the last election to attend the session at the chairman's own expense. On the date of ~~such the~~ course or courses, the county auditor may deliver to all election inspectors at ~~such the~~ meeting the official ballots and all other materials as provided in chapter 16.1-06. Except as otherwise provided in this section, each person attending the course or courses must be compensated as provided in section 16.1-05-05.

3. An election official, at the option of the county auditor, may be excused from attending a third training session on election laws within a twelve-month period. If an election official has attended a training session within the six months preceding a special election, the election official must be compensated at the pay appropriate for those having attended a training session, as provided in section 16.1-05-05, for that election.

**SECTION 3. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-08.1-01 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**16.1-08.1-01. Definitions.** As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise ~~plainly~~ requires:

1. "Association" means any club, association, union, brotherhood, fraternity, organization, or group of any kind of two or more persons, including labor unions, trade associations, professional associations, or governmental associations, which is united for any purpose, business, or object and which assesses any dues, membership fees, or license fees in any amount, or which maintains a treasury fund in any amount. The term does not include corporations, cooperative corporations, limited liability companies, political committees, or political parties.
2. "Candidate" means an individual who seeks nomination for election or election to public office.
3. "Contribution" means a gift, subscription, loan, advance, or deposit of money, made for the purpose of influencing the nomination for election, or election, of any person to public office or aiding or opposing the circulation or passage of a statewide initiative or referendum petition or measure. ~~Contribution~~ The term also means a contract, promise, or agreement, express or implied, whether or not legally enforceable, to make a contribution for any of the above purposes, and. The term includes funds received by a candidate for public office or a political party or committee which are transferred or signed over to that candidate, party, or committee from another candidate, party, or political committee or other source except as provided in subdivision d. This definition The term does not include:
  - a. A loan of money from a bank or other lending institution made in the regular course of business.
  - b. Time spent by volunteer campaign or political party workers.
  - c. Money spent by a candidate on the candidate's own behalf.
  - d. ~~Any money received from a district or state committee of a political party, as established pursuant to sections 16.1-03-06 and 16.1-03-08, except for contributions reported pursuant to section 16.1-08.1-03 by a candidate for legislative office which is immediately transferred or signed over to a district committee of a political party within thirty days of the candidate receiving the money. The district committee of the political party shall report a transfer of this kind as a contribution according to section 16.1-08.1-03 and shall show the origin of the contribution to the legislative candidate.~~
4. "Cooperative corporations", "corporations", and "limited liability companies" are as defined in this code.
5. "Expenditure" means a purchase, payment, distribution, loan, advance, deposit, or gift of money or property, except a loan of money from a bank or other lending institution made in

the regular course of business, made for the purpose of influencing the nomination for election, or election, of any person to office. The term also means a contract, promise, or agreement, express or implied, whether or not legally enforceable, to make any expenditure and includes the transfer of funds by a political committee to another political committee.

6. "Patron" means a person who owns equity interest in the form of stock, shares, or membership or maintains similar financial rights in a cooperative corporation.
7. "Person" means an individual, partnership, committee, association, corporation, cooperative corporation, limited liability company, or other organization or group of persons.
8. "Political committee" means any committee, club, association, or other group of persons which receives contributions or makes expenditures primarily for political purposes.
9. "Political party" means any association, committee, or organization which nominates a candidate for election to any office which may be filled by a vote of the electors of this state or any of its political subdivisions and whose name appears on the election ballot as the candidate of such association, committee, or organization.
10. "Political purpose" means any activity undertaken in support of or in opposition to the election or nomination of a candidate to public office whether the activity is undertaken by a candidate, a political committee, a political party, or any person. The term does not include activities undertaken in the performance of a duty of a state office.
11. "Public office" means every statewide or legislative office to which persons can be elected by vote of the people under the laws of this state.

**SECTION 4. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-08.1-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**16.1-08.1-02. Contributions statement required of candidates.**

1. Any candidate who is soliciting or accepting contributions for any political purpose shall make and file a statement in accordance with this section.
2. The candidate shall include in the statement the name and mailing address of all contributors who contributed in excess of ~~one~~ two hundred dollars in the aggregate during the reporting period to the candidate, the amount of each reportable contribution, and the date each reportable contribution was received.
3. The candidate shall file the statement ~~in the office of the secretary of state~~ no later than the twelfth day before the date of the election in which the candidate's name appears on the ballot or in which the candidate seeks election through write-in votes complete from the beginning of that calendar year through the twentieth day before the date of the election. The candidate shall file a complete statement for the entire calendar year no later than the thirty-first day of January of the following year, regardless of whether the candidate's name appeared on the ballot for any office during that calendar year or whether the candidate did not seek election at any election through write-in votes.

~~Statements of a legislative candidate must be filed in the office of the county auditor of the candidate's county of residence. Statements of state office candidates must be filed in the office of the secretary of state.~~

4. Even if the candidate has not received any contributions in excess of ~~one~~ two hundred dollars during the ~~calendar year~~ reporting period, the candidate shall file a statement as required by this chapter.

**SECTION 5. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-08.1-03 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**16.1-08.1-03. Contributions statement required of political parties.**

1. Any political party that receives contributions in excess of ~~one~~ two hundred dollars in the aggregate during the reporting period shall file a statement containing a detailed list of all contributions received from a person or political committee which exceed ~~one~~ two hundred dollars in amount. The statement must include the name and mailing address of all contributors listed, the amount of each reportable contribution, and the date each reportable contribution was received.
2. A yearend statement covering the entire calendar year must be filed with the secretary of state no later than the thirty-first day of January of the following year. A preelection statement must be filed no later than the twelfth day before any election at which the party has endorsed or will nominate a candidate and must be complete from the beginning of that calendar year through the twentieth day before the election.
3. Even if the political party has not received any contributions in excess of two hundred dollars during the reporting period, the political party shall file a statement as required by this chapter.

**SECTION 6. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-08.1-03.2 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**16.1-08.1-03.2. Political committee registration.** A political committee, other than a political party and a committee organized in support of a legislative candidate, and a person aiding or opposing a measure to be voted upon by the voters of the state shall register its name, address, and its agent's name and address with the secretary of state each calendar year in which it receives any contribution. The registration must be completed within five days of the receipt of any contribution and must be submitted with a registration fee of five dollars. A political committee that organizes and registers according to federal law and makes a disbursement in excess of two hundred dollars to a nonfederal candidate seeking public office in this state is not required to register as a political committee according to this section if the political committee reports according to section 8 of this Act.

**SECTION 7. AMENDMENT.** Subsection 3 of section 16.1-08.1-03.3 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

3. All political committees formed for the purpose of administering the segregated fund provided for in this section shall file a statement showing the name and mailing address of each contributor of an amount in excess of two hundred dollars in the aggregate for the reporting period and a listing of all expenditures of an amount in excess of ~~one~~ two hundred dollars in the aggregate made for political purposes with the secretary of state. The statement must include the amount of each reportable contribution and the date it was received and the amount of each reportable expenditure and the date it was made. A yearend statement covering the entire calendar year must be filed no later than the thirty-first day of the following year. A preelection statement must be filed no later than the twelfth day before any primary, special, or general election and must be complete from the beginning of the calendar year through the twentieth day before the election.

**SECTION 8.** A new section to chapter 16.1-08.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

**Political committees that organize and register according to federal law that make disbursements to nonfederal candidates.** A political committee that organizes and registers according to federal law and makes a disbursement in excess of two hundred dollars to a nonfederal candidate seeking public office in this state shall file a copy of that portion of the committee's federal report detailing the disbursement made to the candidate. The political committee shall file a copy of the committee's federal report with the secretary of state at the time of filing the report with the applicable federal agency. The report must include:

1. The name, mailing address, and treasurer of the political committee;

2. The recipient's name and mailing address; and
3. The date and amount of the disbursement made.

**SECTION 9. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-08.1-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**16.1-08.1-06. Contributions statement requirements.**

1. A statement required by this chapter to be filed with the secretary of state ~~or county auditor~~ must be:
  4. a. Deemed properly filed when deposited in an established post office within the prescribed time, postage affixed, and directed to the secretary of state ~~or county auditor~~, but if it is not received, a duplicate of the statement must be promptly filed upon notice by the secretary of state ~~or county auditor~~ of its nonreceipt.
  2. b. Preserved by the secretary of state ~~or county auditor~~ for a period of four years from the date of filing. The statement is to be considered a part of the public records of the secretary of state's ~~or county auditor's~~ office and must be open to public inspection.
2. If the filing date falls on a Saturday or Sunday or a holiday on which the office of the secretary of state ~~or county auditor~~ is closed, the statement must be filed on the next available day on which the office of the secretary of state ~~or county auditor~~ is open. In determining the amount of individual contributions from any contributor, all amounts received from the same contributor during the reporting period must be aggregated to report an overall total contribution for the purposes of the statements required by this chapter. Aggregate contributions must reference the date of the most recent contribution. Contributions made separately by different persons from joint accounts are considered separate contributions for reporting purposes.

**SECTION 10.** A new section to chapter 16.1-11 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

**Deadline for placing county and city measures on primary, general, or special election ballots.** Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a county may not submit a measure for consideration of the voters at a primary, general, or special statewide, district, or county election after four p.m. on the sixtieth day before the election. A city that has combined its regular or a special election with a primary, general, or special county election, according to the provisions set forth in section 40-21-02, may not submit a measure for consideration of the voters at that election after four p.m. on the sixtieth day before the election.

**SECTION 11. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-11-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**16.1-11-06. State candidate's petition or political party certificate of endorsement required to get name on ballot - Contents - Filing.** Every candidate for United States senator, United States representative, a state office except the office of state senator or state representative, and judges of the supreme and district courts shall, ~~not more than seventy nor less than sixty days,~~ between the first date candidates may begin circulating nominating petitions according to this chapter and before four p.m. of the sixtieth day; prior to any primary election, present to the secretary of state either:

1. A certificate of endorsement signed by the state chairman of any legally recognized political party containing the candidate's name, post-office address, the title of the office to which the candidate aspires, and the party which the candidate represents; or
2. A petition containing the following:
  - a. The candidate's name, post-office address, and the title of the office to which the candidate aspires.

- b. The name of the party the candidate represents if the petition is for an office under party designation.
- c. The signatures of qualified electors, the number of which must be determined as follows:
  - (1) If the office is under party designation, the signatures of three percent of the total vote cast for the candidates of the party with which the candidate affiliates for the same position at the last general election. However, no more than three hundred signatures may be required.
  - (2) If there was no candidate of a party for a position at the preceding general election, at least three hundred signatures.
  - (3) If the office is under the no-party designation, at least three hundred signatures.
- d. The mailing address and the date of signing for each signer.

If the petition or certificate of endorsement is for the office of governor or lieutenant governor, it must contain the names and other information required of candidates for both those offices. If the petition or certificate of endorsement is mailed, it must be in the possession of the secretary of state before four p.m. of the sixtieth day prior to the primary election.

**SECTION 12. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-11-11 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**16.1-11-11. County and legislative district candidates' petitions - Filing - Contents.** Every candidate for a county or legislative district office shall present, ~~not more than seventy nor less than sixty days~~ between the first date candidates may begin circulating nominating petitions according to this chapter and before four p.m. of the sixtieth day before any primary election, to the county auditor of the county in which the candidate resides either:

- 1. A certificate of endorsement signed by the district chairman of any legally recognized political party containing the candidate's name, post-office address, the title of the office to which the candidate aspires, and the party that the candidate represents; or
- 2. A petition containing the following:
  - a. The candidate's name, post-office address, and the title of the office to which the candidate aspires.
  - b. The name of the party the candidate represents, only if it is a petition for an office that is under party designation.
  - c. The signatures of qualified electors, the number of which must be determined as follows:
    - (1) If the office is a county office, the signatures of not less than two percent and not more than five percent of the total vote cast for the office at the most recent general election at which the office was voted upon.
    - (2) If the office is a county office and multiple candidates were elected to the office at the preceding general election at which the office was voted upon, the signatures of not less than two percent and not more than five percent of the votes cast for all candidates divided by the number of candidates that were to be elected to that office.
    - (3) If the office is a county office and no candidate was elected or no votes were cast for the office at any general election, the number of signers equal to the percentage as provided in paragraph 1 applied to the total average vote cast for the offices of sheriff and county auditor at the most recent general election at

which those officers were elected in the petitioner's county. This average must be determined by dividing by two the total vote cast for those offices.

- (4) If the office is a legislative office, the signatures of at least one percent of the total resident population of the legislative district as determined by the most recent federal decennial census.

- (5) In no case may more than three hundred signatures be required.

- d. The mailing address and date of signing for each signer.

If the petition or certificate of endorsement is mailed, it must be in the possession of the county auditor before four p.m. on the sixtieth day before the primary election.

**SECTION 13. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-11-22 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**16.1-11-22. Primary election ballot - Form - Voters to vote for candidates of only one party.** At the primary election there may be only one ballot for all parties or principles. The ballot must be in the following form:

1. The ballot must be entitled the "consolidated primary election ballot".
2. Each party or principle having candidates at the primary election must have a separate column on the ballot; the columns must be separated by a solid six-point rule.
3. At the head of each column must be printed the name of the political party or principle which it represents.
4. In each column below the party or principle title must be printed: "You may vote for the candidates of only one party at the primary election. If you cast votes in more than one party column and vote for candidates of more than one party, your party ballot will be rejected."
5. Immediately below the warning against voting for candidates of more than one party must be printed: "Put a crossmark (X) opposite the name of the candidate for whom you wish to vote. To vote for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot write or paste that person's name in the blank space provided for that purpose."
6. The offices specified in section 16.1-11-26 must be arranged in each column with the name of each office in the center of each party column at the head of the names of the aspirants for the office.
7. Immediately under the name of each office must be printed: "Vote for no more than \_\_\_\_\_ name (or names)."
8. At the side of the name of each aspirant and in a column must be printed a square or other figure for making a crossmark or other mark. No squares or other figures may be printed at the head of the ballot.
9. The political party or principle which cast the largest vote for governor at the most recent primary election at which the office of governor was voted upon must have the left-hand column, and the party or principle casting the next largest vote must have the next column, and so on.

The judges and the inspector of elections shall inform each elector at the primary, before voting, that if the voter votes for candidates of more than one party the voter's party ballot will be rejected.

**SECTION 14. AMENDMENT.** Subsection 3 of section 16.1-13-22 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

3. At primary elections, the inspector or judge shall also inform each elector that if the elector splits the party ballot or votes for candidates of more than one party the elector's party ballot will be rejected.

**SECTION 15. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-15-01 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**16.1-15-01. Ballots void and not counted - Part of ballot may be counted.**

1. In the canvass of the votes at any election, a ballot is void and may not be counted if:
  - 4- a. It is not endorsed with the official stamp and initials as provided in this title; or
  - 2- b. It is impossible to determine the elector's choice from the ballot or parts of a ballot.
2. If a ballot is marked so only a part of the voter's intention can be determined, the election judges shall count such part. If an elector votes for more than the number of persons to be elected to any office, the elector's ballot may be invalidated only insofar as the elector's vote for such office is concerned, and the balance of the elector's ballot, if otherwise proper, may not be invalidated. However, at primary elections only, a party ballot is void if the elector votes for candidates of more than one party.

**SECTION 16. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-15-19 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**16.1-15-19. County canvassing board to disregard technicalities, misspelling, and abbreviations - Votes from unestablished precincts disregarded.** In canvassing the election returns, the county canvassing board shall disregard technicalities, misspelling, and the use of initial letters or abbreviations of the name of any candidate for office if it can be ascertained for whom the vote was intended. The board may not count votes polled in any place except at established precincts. The county canvassing board is authorized to stamp and initial properly postmarked absentee ballots that were not considered or counted at the various precincts in the county for the reasons provided in sections 16.1-07-11 and 16.1-07-12.

**SECTION 17. AMENDMENT.** Subsection 6 of section 16.1-16-01 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

6. The persons entitled to participate at the recount are:
  - a. Each candidate involved in the recount, either personally or by a representative.
  - b. A qualified elector favoring each side of a question if the recount involves a question or proposition submitted to a vote of the electorate.

The persons allowed to participate may challenge the acceptance or exclusion of any ballot. The person challenging a ballot must state the reason for the challenge based upon the law, and the county auditor or other political subdivision election official shall count the challenged ballot as the auditor or election official deems proper and shall then set the ballot aside with a notation that it was challenged and how it was counted. At the conclusion of the recount, the county auditor or other election official shall submit all challenged ballots to the recount board for decision. Except for political subdivision recounts other than counties, the recount board must be composed of the state's attorney of the county, the chairman of the board of county commissioners, and the clerk of the district court of the county. Unless otherwise specified by law, for a political subdivision other than a county, the governing body of the political subdivision shall appoint the recount board. No person may serve on the recount board if the person would not be qualified to serve on the election board pursuant to subsection 2 of section 16.1-05-02. If any of the members of the recount board are disqualified or cannot serve for any other reason, the members of the board of county commissioners or other political subdivision governing body who would be qualified to serve on the board shall appoint disinterested qualified electors of the county or other political subdivision to serve as alternates. The



recount board shall review all challenged ballots and on majority vote shall decide how those ballots are counted. The recount board is authorized to stamp and initial properly postmarked absentee ballots that were not considered or counted at the various precincts in the county for the reasons provided in sections 16.1-07-11 and 16.1-07-12 or by the county canvassing boards as provided in section 16.1-15-19. The decision of the recount board is final, subject to the right to contest the election as provided in this chapter. If during the recount a recess is called, the county auditor or other political subdivision election official shall take appropriate steps to safeguard the ballots.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Senate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker of the House

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Clerk of the House

This certifies that the within bill originated in the Senate of the Fifty-sixth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota and is known on the records of that body as Senate Bill No. 2148.

Senate Vote:      Yeas    31            Nays    15            Absent    3

House Vote:      Yeas    75            Nays    20            Absent    3

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate

Received by the Governor at \_\_\_\_\_ M. on \_\_\_\_\_, 1999.

Approved at \_\_\_\_\_ M. on \_\_\_\_\_, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor

Filed in this office this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 1999,  
at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of State