



NDSBA
NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL
BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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HB 1182
House GVA Committee
January 21, 2021
Testimony of Alexis Baxley

Good morning Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name is Alexis Baxley, and I serve as the executive director of the North Dakota School Boards Association. NDSBA represents the elected school boards of all 175 public school districts and several special education units in North Dakota.

The North Dakota School Boards Association stands in opposition to HB 1182. The office of school board member has long been a non-partisan office, and we believe it should remain that way. Student achievement does not have a political party.

School board members are elected by their fellow citizens because of their passion for students and commitment to the community and because they are someone fellow citizens are willing to entrust with their children or grandchildren's education rather than their political party affiliation.

Allowing candidates for locally elected offices to designate a political party will have negative consequences to those offices and boards. School board members do not need to declare a party to be an effective member. In fact, doing so would likely cause unnecessary debate and disagreement over issues not pertinent to operating a school district. Citizens are likely already aware of the beliefs of candidates for local office. Additionally, allowing candidates to declare a party may mean attracting outside contributions to school board elections or deterring candidates who do not easily identify with a party from running.

We all expect our children to receive a balanced education when it comes to history and politics. Parents and communities become upset, and rightfully so, when a teacher or curriculum push a particular viewpoint. Just as we expect public school district staff to leave their party affiliations at the door when they come to work, so too is it appropriate for school board members.

NDSBA respectfully urges you to give HB 1182 a Do Not Pass recommendation. Thank you for your consideration.