

**NDSBA****NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL
BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

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HB 1311
Testimony of Amy DeKok
House Judiciary Committee
January 27, 2021

Chairman Klemin and members of the House Judiciary Committee, my name is Amy DeKok. I am in-house Legal Counsel for the North Dakota School Boards Association. NDSBA represents all 178 North Dakota public school districts and their boards. I am here today in opposition to HB 1311.

Our schools serve arguably the most vulnerable population of citizens. Parents entrust their children to our schools to protect them and keep them safe from harm. If passed, HB 1311 would likely make it more difficult for schools to keep kids safe and protected. NDSBA opposes this bill because the reference to school as a public gathering where at it is generally unlawful to possess a firearm or dangerous weapon is inadequate. The reference, which appears in subsection 1(a) is: "at a school or school athletic or sporting event." This does not take into account non-athletic or non-sporting events sponsored or sanctioned by a school. It also does not factor in property that may be leased by a school and used for school purposes, but may not be a "school." The language should be amended to include: "a school, property or facility owned or leased by a school, or at a school sponsored or sanctioned event."

Additionally, NDSBA opposes the bill because it seeks to allow individuals with a class 1 or class 2 license to possess a firearm or dangerous weapon at a publicly-owned or operated building. This would include any publicly owned building where youth sports or activities occur, such as the World War Memorial building here in Bismarck. These activities are typically not school-sponsored or school-sanctioned; rather, they are run through the parks and recreation department.

For these reasons, NDSBA stands in opposition to HB 1311 and asks this committee to give it a do not pass recommendation. Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.