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SECRETARY OF STATE

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March 11, 2021

TO: Chairman Vedaa and Members of the Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

FR: Jim Silrum, Deputy Secretary of State on behalf of Secretary of State Al Jaeger

RE: HB 1094 – Centralized desktop support services

In the 17+ years that I have served as Deputy Secretary of State, our office has not always had the luxury we have now in the desktop services provided by North Dakota Information Technology (NDIT). We have had to go to outside sources to secure these services. In our searching for an outside source, we were never able to find one that met the full extent of our office needs.

In January of 2017, the field of elections was designated by Homeland Security as critical infrastructure and this designation made it even more imperative that our systems had the best cybersecurity protections. We have that now in what is being provided to us from NDIT and we are incredibly appreciative.

On behalf of the Secretary of State, if the committee recommends a do pass on this bill, I request the committee to make certain that this bill would only remove the requirement for constitutional officers to use the desktop support services provided by NDIT. And to make sure that the offices removed from the law can continue receiving the valuable desktop support that has been provided to us for several years now.