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House Bill 1054 **House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee** January 5, 2023

Chairman Schauer and members of the committee, my name is Michael Howe, and I am honored to serve as Secretary of State for North Dakota. I am here in support of HB1054 which relates to notary public commissions issued by my office. This change simply seeks to streamline the process to obtain or renew a notary public commission and clarify requirements for those seeking a renewal of a commission.

Passage of this bill would implement a form be used in the process to ensure all critical information is gathered to expedite an initial commission or renewal. The forms are available through FirstStop, the Secretary of State's online business and licensing system. It also adjusts the timeframe for a renewal of a commission to better serve notaries.

For the renewal of a notary public commission, the timeframe would be up to 60 days prior to the current expiration date. This timeframe limits the amount of time a notary public must maintain two stamping devices and minimizes the time between the date of the issuance of the new bond and the actual term of the notary public commission.

Each time a notary public renews his or her commission, a new stamping device must be obtained so that it includes the new expiration date of the commission. Often, when a notary public renews his or her commission, the current commission has not yet expired, and the new commission is not yet effective. Therefore, a notary public must use his or her current stamping device until it expires and begin using the new stamping device on the new commission start date. The 60-day timeframe limits the length of time a notary must still use the current stamping device.

A new surety bond is required when a notary public renews his or her commission. The surety bond is to cover notarial acts performed during the term of the commission. If a notary public submits a renewal far in advance, the date on the surety bond is further away from what would be the actual start date of the new commission. The 60-day timeframe ensures that the date of the surety bond is closer to the start date of the commission.

I request your support of HB1054 to better serve this important process. I am happy to take any questions you may have or defer them to a member of my capable team if needed.