

1 North Dakota School Study Council Testimony in Opposition to HB 1312 –
2 School Board Elections

3 Chairman Longmuir and Members of the Committee,

4 Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1312. The
5 schools I represent are opposed to this bill. However, we are definitely in
6 favor of getting people out to vote; their voices need to be heard!

7 Statewide, most school board members run unopposed. Is this a solution
8 looking for a problem? Many of our schools have trouble finding people to
9 run for any seat.

10 School calendars are circular in nature. Having school board members
11 start July 1st allows them to be involved for the entire school year. Being
12 elected in November and taking office on Jan. 1st, means that the new
13 member is coming in halfway through the school year. It would be the
14 equivalent of legislators taking office at crossover. Most public entities
15 calendars coincide with the calendar year, but school do not.

16 As a superintendent in Minnesota, I experienced this first hand. There was
17 frustration on my part when the direction of the school board would change
18 part way through the school year. The frustration was also shared by
19 school board members. Some members run with an agenda and want to
20 bring about change, but the school handbooks were already approved and
21 the budget/mill levies were already set and adopted. It made it very difficult
22 for them to make any meaningful changes during their first six months.

23 We ask for a “Do Not Pass” on HB 1312. Thank you for your consideration!

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25 Dr. Paul Stremick