

Written Testimony for the House Political Subdivisions

January 24, 2025

Kelsey Majeske, Publisher

RE: Opposition for HB 1380

Good afternoon, Chairman and members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee,

My name is Kelsey Majeske, and I serve as the Publisher for the *Center Republican* and several other small community newspapers across North Dakota. In Oliver County, the Center Republican holds the designation as the legal newspaper for the County, City, and School District.

In 2024, Oliver County was billed a total of \$9,245.20 for all advertising placed with the Center Republican, of which \$3,135 was allocated for the publication of regular and special meeting minutes. While this represents an increase from the \$5,655.98 paid in 2023, the increase is primarily due to additional public bid notices and election-related costs. This cost represents less than half of a percentage point of the overall budget for Oliver County.

I firmly believe that publishing meeting minutes in the newspaper each month serves as an essential service to our community. In Oliver County, where nearly 40% of the population is over the age of 60, many residents continue to rely on print media rather than digital platforms. We frequently receive inquiries from readers seeking meeting minutes, particularly when they are delayed in being sent to us for publication. For many in our community, these minutes are a vital tool for staying informed about their local government activities.

While we live in an era where digital platforms are often seen as more convenient, providing meeting minutes in print remains a critical service. It ensures transparency and accountability, offering residents a reliable and tangible record of government actions. This approach minimizes the potential for discrepancies and fosters greater public trust.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge you to vote against HB1380.