

Testimony of Cole Higlin

North Dakota Recreation & Park Association

To Senate Judiciary Committee

In Opposition to HB 1588

Monday, March 31, 2025

Chair Larson and members of the Committee, my name is Cole Higlin, and I am the public policy chair of the North Dakota Recreation & Park Association (NDRPA). We represent more than 900 members, primarily park districts, and work to advance parks, recreation and conservation for an enhanced quality of life in North Dakota.

We oppose House Bill 1588, specifically Section 3 and the removal of “publicly owned or operated building” from Section 5, which we believe **is confusing and will create enforcement challenges** for the following reasons:

- The bill would create ambiguity for park districts that manage shared spaces, especially when facilities host both public and private events (i.e., school activities and birthday parties or weddings) on the same day.
- As written, it is difficult to determine when weapons are permitted in multi-use public spaces, leading to confusion for both staff and visitors.
- Local staff, many of whom are young adults, would be tasked with enforcing complex weapon policies in situations where the distinction between public and private use is unclear.

In conclusion, we urge the committee to carefully consider the enforcement challenges, confusion, and safety concerns this bill would create. Please oppose HB 1588 and explore alternative approaches that better balance public safety with individual rights.

Thank you for your time and consideration.