



HB 1307
Senate State and Local Government Committee
March 21, 2025

Chair Roers and members of the Senate State and Local Government Committee:

My name is Carol Sawicki, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the League of Women Voters of North Dakota. **LWVND opposes House Bill 1307.**

The League of Women Voters supports legislation that allows local jurisdictions to explore alternative electoral methods and supports state election laws that allow for more options at both the state and local levels. HB 1307 states that “Any ordinance enacted or adopted by a county under a home rule charter in conflict with state law is void.” HB 1307 would prohibit localities from adopting alternative voting methods, thereby constricting rather than allowing more options. It also appears that Fargo, which adopted approval voting in 2018, is not grandfathered into the bill, so its use of an alternate voting system, which it has used successfully for three election cycles, would be prohibited.

Alternative voting systems, such as ranked choice and approval voting, have been adopted in various states and localities around the country. Ranked choice and approval voting methods allow voters to be more expressive with who they wish to represent them and ensure that the winner in an election will be the most popular candidate.

In the approval voting system used in Fargo city elections, voters choose as many candidates as they support without ranking them in any specific order. The candidate with a majority of support will generally win (unlike traditional plurality voting in which a candidate with the largest *minority* often wins). The Center for Election Science has determined that approval voting encourages candidates to build coalition and consensus, prevents voters from having to split their vote between similar candidates, and is an accurate and transparent voting system.¹

In November 2018, Fargo citizens voted 63.52% to 36.48% to amend the city charter to implement approval voting. The League of Women Voters of North Dakota supports the right of Fargo citizens to continue to vote using the method they have deemed most fair, simple, accurate, and consistent with ND Century Code 40-05.1-06 Subsection 9 which gives home rule cities the powers “to provide for all matters pertaining to city elections, except as to qualifications of electors.” In the three election cycles in which approval

¹ Why CES Advocates for Approval Voting. <https://electionscience.org/education/why-approval-voting>



voting has been used in Fargo, there have been no reports of voter confusion, no reports of election officials dislike of the system, and no delayed elections results.

Since HB 1307 would prevent North Dakota citizens from exercising their home rule constitutional rights and would prevent localities from implementing alternative voting methods, the **League of Women Voters of North Dakota strongly urges committee members to give HB 1307 a Do Not Pass recommendation.**

Thank you, Chair Roers and members of the committee, for your consideration of our testimony.

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