

1 HB1350 – Approval of School District Construction Bonds

2 Williams County School District #8 – Chris Jundt Testimony

3 Williston Basin School District #007 – Chris Jundt Testimony

4 Good morning Chairman Headland and members of the Finance and Taxation committee. My
5 name is Chris Jundt, and I currently serve as the School Board President for Williams County
6 School District #8 as well as Williston Basin School District #007. I am writing to you today to
7 urge you to issue a Do Pass recommendation on HB 1350.

8 The Williston area has seen exploding enrollment growth over the past decade, which has led to
9 overcrowded classrooms and educational settings that are less than ideal learning environments.
10 Our community has worked tirelessly to address these issues thru school construction bonds that
11 have consistently failed by very slim margins. Our community has taken the steps recently to
12 approve a reorganization of the two school districts that currently service our community. I am
13 hopeful that this will ultimately end up helping with community support for future construction
14 projects, but we also must look at the outdated requirement of the 60% super majority threshold.
15 North Dakota is one of the few states left with this threshold in the United States and the time has
16 come to look at adjusting this requirement. I personally believe a simple majority of 50% plus one
17 vote should be the requirement, but I also see the other side of wanting to protect rural areas where
18 a rural landowner might pay a disproportionate share of the tax bill on a new school project. The
19 proposed bill is a good compromise that still maintains a super majority requirement, but will give
20 school districts like ours across the state a much better mechanism for funding the much needed
21 school construction projects.

22 Portable classrooms have been added to the school districts servicing the Williston community in
23 much larger numbers than anyone would like to see. The Williams County Commission completed
24 a study regarding the school districts in Williams County this past year. One of the major
25 takeaways for me from that study was the commentary by Dr. Lind and Dr. Schatz within that
26 report that indicated modular classrooms are not an ideal learning environment. If we want to give
27 our students in the State of North Dakota a first class education we must look at changing the way

1 we do business and allow schools to have more tools in their toolbox to provide adequate facilities
2 for those students to learn in.

3 I would like to finish my testimony from a different perspective. I want to look at the
4 Reorganization that just passed between Williston Public School District #1 and Williams County
5 School District #8. As you all may know, reorganizing a school district is not a small deal. After
6 going through the process, I would have to say it is going to make a much larger impact on the two
7 districts than passing any bond would have. The point I am trying to make is if the reorganization
8 would have required 60% approval of the public to pass, the reorganization would NOT have
9 passed.

10 Your predecessors in the ND Legislature understood the need for the type of language in HB 1350.
11 NDCC 57-15-14 sets different thresholds for passing a school district excess levy based on the
12 population of the school district. I urge you to follow the precedent they have set and give HB
13 1350 a DO PASS recommendation. Thank you for your time and your service to the constituents
14 across the State of North Dakota.