

1 Chairman Weisz, members of the House Human Services Committee,

2 Good morning. My name is Mike Bitz, and I am fortunate to serve as
3 superintendent for the Manan Public Schools. I come to you today to request a “Do
4 Not Pass” recommendation for HCR 3007.

5 Mandan Public Schools desires to be responsive to our students and families.
6 We surveyed our parents in early August to find out how they wanted their schools to
7 reopen. Mandan elementary parents overwhelming wanted to return to school full-
8 time face-to-face. That is the model we implemented. At the middle and high school
9 level the responses favored a hybrid model, where students would attend school in
10 person one day and then attend virtually then next. Only having half the students
11 present each day, allowed for us to socially distance while students were in school.
12 We re-surveyed our parents in mid-November and as a result, Mandan Schools have
13 been full-time K-12 since we returned from Christmas break.

14 An interesting data point that was unchanged in both surveys was that roughly
15 12% of our parents wanted virtual only instruction for their children due to health
16 concerns. We did our best to accommodate these families and we started the school
17 year with almost 400 students in virtual only instruction. To accommodate these
18 families, we re-assigned five elementary and middle school teachers from brick-and-
19 mortar classrooms to virtual only instruction. We also made some adjustments to
20 teacher schedules at the at the high school level to allow us to serve our families that
21 wanted virtual only education.

22 Providing a virtual education option for our students and families is an option
23 that is only possible through an executive order. Virtual education is not for everyone.
24 We have had over 100 students return to in-person instruction. However, the vast
25 majority of our on-line students are doing well and thriving in their virtual
26 environment. If HCR 3007 is enacted and this executive order is null and void, these
27 students and families would literally have the rug pulled out from under them.
28 Their educational model would change overnight. This is not educationally sound or
29 legislatively prudent.

30 I urge you to give HCR 3007 a “Do Not Pass” recommendation. Thank you for
31 your time; I’m happy to stand for any questions you may have.