

Testimony
House Bill 1186

House Political Subdivisions Committee
February 12th, 2021
Parshall Rural Ambulance Service

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My Name is Ken Rensch, Manager of Parshall Ambulance Service. I am here today in support of House Bill 1186, which would give districts the ability to annex territory into a rural ambulance service district (11-28.3-15) and the responsibility to determine response areas within its district boundaries (11-28.3-08).

With the uncertainty of rural ems and the likelihood of losing services in the future including an adjacent service of ours. We feel it is imperative to have the ability to annex adjacent territory into our district. Under current statute it could take 2 years to modify the district boundaries and generate tax revenue for the district. The ability to annex territory into the district and streamline the process could help prevent a domino effect and losing additional services. The loss of a neighboring ambulance service will place a higher burden onto us both financially and in manpower. With the ability to annex adjacent territory we service into our district and generate tax revenue quicker. We feel it will help reduce a portion of that burden and minimize the risk of losing additional ambulance services.

For as long as I can remember, the question of who is responsible for EMS has been asked. We feel that an ambulance district and its elected board of directors should have some say over ambulance response boundaries within an ambulance district. Under ND statute an ambulance districts board of directors has the power to maintain and supervise an EMS company to service the district.

Our rural ambulance district was established in 1984. In 2018 a new ambulance service was created adjacent to our district. Under NDCC 57-40.6-10 the responsibility of designating ambulance response boundaries falls under the emergency services communications system coordinator. Currently, two thirds of a township within our district is being serviced by another ambulance. Though the entire district has been, and continues to support our ambulance district through taxes, donations, memorials, and volunteer hours. Our elected board member from this township has spoken with nearly every resident she represents; all wish to remain part of our district as well as receive the services our district provides.

Our ambulance provides a higher level of care and quicker response times by staffing a Paramedic and EMT 24/7. When figuring response times, road access and road conditions, especially during winter months, our ambulance will reach this township quicker. In 2018 our management, board members, and affected residents expressed concerns to the 911 system coordinator over these response boundaries. Our concerns were met with resistance and we were referred to NDCC 57-40.6-10.

HB 1183 would give the elected directors of an ambulance district the authority to maintain and supervise EMS boundaries within its district. At a minimum we feel our elected board of directors should have input and an avenue to contest ambulance response boundaries involving our district. We urge you to pass this bill and give our elected board of directors and our taxpayers the ability to maintain our ambulance boundaries and annex into our district. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Parshall Rural Ambulance Service