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House Political Subdivisions

HB #1367 - (2/11/2021 Hearing – 10:30 A.M.)

Dear Chair Dockter and Honorable Members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee:

I am respectfully requesting you to support a **“DO NOT PASS”** on House Bill #1367 relating to the adoption and referral of preliminary budgets of cities, counties, school districts and park districts.

First, let me thank you for your support in defeating similar property tax bills limiting the ability for local political subdivisions to make decisions which have a direct impact on local services. House Bill #1367 also restricts the ability of local governments to operate efficiently if an entity’s budget is referred to the vote of the people and the preliminary budget is disapproved by the electors. Again, I am asking that you trust the people we elect at the local levels of government that they do not place any unnecessary tax burdens on the citizens.

Also, in regards to HB #1367, annual budgets should not be brought before the vote of the people. In small cities especially where voter turnout is low, the number of required signatures (10%) amounts to a few disgruntled taxpayers. In the case of Stanley City, the votes cast for the office of governor of the state at the last regular election (2020 General Election) was 976 votes requiring only 97 votes to put on the ballot. Think of the cities that have far less voters, requiring just a fraction of the signatures to refer their preliminary budget to the vote of the people. The budget could easily be referred on a yearly basis for cities with a very small voting population.

Considering the time frame involved as proposed in HB #1367, cities would likely need to hold a special election each year that their preliminary budget is referred to the vote of the people and even then entities may not be able to meet time restraints, depending when the petition to refer is filed. HB #1367 does not address any deadlines for the petition. Currently a preliminary budget has to be submitted by August 10th of each year to the county auditor and the final budget adopted by October 7th and submitted to the county auditor by October 10th.

Please do not place this unnecessary burden on local governments, your support for a **“DO NOT PASS”** on House Bill #1367 is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Allyn Sveen

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