

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

RE: House bill no. 1367

Chairman Dockter and members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee:

For the record, I am the City Auditor in Carrington.

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.

I wish to share with the committee the impact and concerns with this bill.

- **The time frame.** Setting the city’s annual budget is a time consuming task for myself, other department heads, and elected officials. Moving up the budget deadline one month from the present August 10th deadline to July 10th would introduce greater risk in budget forecasting. I rely on having 6 months of actual data to base budget forecasts from and this change would place a burden on all involved in the budgeting process to make additional “assumptions” or “best guesses”.
- **Added cost to taxpayers.** The additional publication requirements will incur additional cost to taxpayers as well as even tighter deadlines for cities, such as Carrington, that only have a weekly edition newspaper that have deadlines of Tuesday at 1 pm to make next week’s edition. The section relating to the preliminary budget adopted by the governing body being subject to referral is concerning. Annual budgets should not be brought before a vote of the people. Elected officials are elected to scrutinize budgets. In small cities, 10% of the vote cast in the city for the office of governor in the last regular election could amount to only a few disgruntled taxpayers to successfully pass the petition. Holding a special election, potentially on an annual basis, adds additional cost to taxpayers.
- **Going backwards.** In the last session, legislators approved eliminating the publishing requirements. Why are we going back to notification methods that weren’t favored by the taxpayer or elected officials? The consolidated taxation notice under current law has been well received from taxpayers in Carrington.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Gast