Thursday, February 11, 2021

House Political Subdivisions Committee
HB 1397

CHAIRMAN DOCKTER AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

My name is Jack McDonald. I'm appearing on behalf of the North Dakota Newspaper and Broadcasters Associations. We object to this bill without our suggested amendment.

We recognize that normally drafts of reports, audits, studies, etc. are exempt records until presented to the public entity that requested them.

However, redistricting only comes around once every 10 years. Redistricting plans are incredibly complex and involve very detailed changes to the state's 47 legislative district, sometimes coming down to block to block changes in larger cities.

HB 1397 prevents North Dakota citizens, whose rights to legislative representation are seriously affected by these plans, the opportunity to review and respond, object, agree, offer amendments, etc., to these plans until they are presented to a meeting of Legislative Management or the Legislature.

Obviously there is not time in the maybe 15-20 minutes when the drafts are made available at a public meeting to prepare logical and meaningful objections and/or amendments to plans that took months of planning and computerized research to develop.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HB 1397

On page 1, line 22, after the word “is,” delete the remainder of the line and insert “exempt from Section 44-04-18(6) and is a public record.”

On page 1, delete lines 22-24.

On page 2, delete lines 1-2.

And renumber accordingly.