



North Dakota Township Officers Association

Promoting basic Grassroots Government!

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February 4, 2021

House Political Subdivisions Committee

To oppose HB 1445

Good morning Chairman Dockter and members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee. I am Larry Syverson, the Executive Secretary of the North Dakota Township Officers Association. NDTOA represents the nearly 6,000 Township Officers that serve 1,317 organized ND Townships.

I actually support HB 1445, but it goes too far, I have to ask that it be amended. As written, it could begin township equalization in March, that would cause all kinds of problems. County tax directors are very busy in March getting the farm home exemption applications handled and performing other preparations.

To remedy that issue and allay the objections to HB 1445 I would respectfully suggest deleting the inserted words "March or" in line 9 and 13 of page 1. That would leave the change to allow that a township could hold its equalization any date in April. Currently that is allowed only if an assessor serves more than one township.

The ability to hold the equalization any date in April would allow more flexibility for the assessor, board and taxpayers to meet and work out any issues. There is always the possibility that the advertised meeting date could be a storm day; there may be a lack of a quorum for any scheduled meeting; and often follow-up meetings are necessary to complete the work.

My county tax director has told me that if we cannot get the work done at the township it can be taken up at the county, but why not allow a little more time and flexibility so the taxpayer does not need to go to the county or state or even worse must file for an abatement; the goal is to satisfy the taxpayer's concerns.

Please amend HB 1445 and make it the bill I should have asked to have introduced on our behalf. So that all townships have the month of April to complete their equalizations. As it stands now some townships have 15 days for equalization and others have the month of April, please make it consistent.

Thank you, Chairman Dockter and committee members; that concludes my prepared statement; I will try to answer any questions you may have.

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