

My name is Senator Jason Heitkamp and I represent the 26th legislative district, Home of the greatest BISON football player to ever play for the Buffalo Bills. Chairman and committee members, I would like to thank all of you for allowing me to address Senate Bill 2331.

Senate Bill 2331 relates to election of the state health officer and human services commissioner. This bill allows the qualified electors of this state to elect a state health officer for a four - year term at the appropriate general election, beginning in 2022. This bill also allows the qualified electors of this state to elect a human services commissioner who must be elected for a four-year term at the appropriate general election, beginning in 2022.

We have seen great power given to the State Health officer and to the Human Services Director in the last year... Maybe they have really had this power for years, but the citizens of the great state of North Dakota just didn't realize that they had it. And the citizens have contacted me and told me, as their legislative representative, that it is time to change the way they are hired. You see, in the state of North Dakota, the citizens want to be able to be represented by people who listen to them and can be held responsible to them. The citizens want to vet them and hire them during an election process.

Political representation is the activity of making citizens "present" in public policy making processes... when political actors act in the best interest of citizens... This definition of political representation is consistent with a wide variety of views on what representing implies and what the duties of representatives are. For example, representing may imply acting on the expressed wishes of citizens, but it may alternatively imply acting according to what the representatives themselves judge is in the best interests of citizens. And representatives may be viewed as individuals who have been authorized to act on the behalf of others or may alternatively be viewed as those who will be held to account by those they are representing.

And Senate Bill 2331 will allow the citizens to elect the state health officer and human services commissioner. The citizens will be represented the way they want to be represented. Just what the citizens have asked for.