

March 30, 2021
Senate Human Services Committee
HB 1151
Testimony in opposition.

Chairman Lee and members of the Committee:

I just have a few comments for you this morning.

I have spent a good deal of time trying to figure out the genesis of the statement, “The Dental Board is one of the two most difficult to deal with.” I would seem likely that I might have one of the best vantage points from which to see it; but I can’t. Whenever I hear this statement, I have asked, “What is the genesis of that? Where does it come from?” No one has an answer with any substance. I would contend it originates from those who are unhappy with Board decisions made at one time or another. We all know of actions taken in Washington D.C. to remove or eliminate those who disagree with what others believe to be right, even when those “others” accomplish assigned tasks appropriately. This bill now appears to have been shaped in Washington’s example of not approving of something done right.

I’ve been told by the North Dakota Dental Association that for ethical reasons, they are neutral on 1151. However, that clearly doesn’t appear to be the case. It is **never** ethically wrong to do the best thing for dental patients. Some entities have objected how the Board of dentistry has developed proposed rules. They wrongly accusing the board of shutting them out of the process, every aspect of the process was been done in accordance with procedure established by the Rules Committee. Everyone wishing to have equal opportunity to participate, have had equal opportunity. Because the NDDA failed to heed the opportunity, one person now cries “foul.” They claim they deserved an exception to the prescribed process all others have navigated and adhered to because they were wronged by the Board. When you don’t don’t show up in time to board the plane, don’t blame the airline for leaving you for a later flight. There will be another rules opportunity for the Dental Association. I would urge them to be engaged in it next time – as it happens – not after.

It is not unusual for D.C. politicians tack unrelated elements onto well intended legislation for the purpose of implementing unpopular projects or ideas. This bill was intended to be about teledentistry, and it no doubt began with good intentions. Early Senate amendments offered from several sources made it far better then the original. It began to look like something good for the citizens of North Dakota. What happened? My understanding that a definition of a “mule” includes: a good person who carries elicited drugs that can hurt someone. With the last minute amendment totally unrelated to the stated purpose of teledentistry that eviscerates the Board of Dental examiners, HB1151 has also become something good carrying something quite bad for the state of North Dakota. It’s a mule.

HB 1151 one deserves a DO NOT PASS recommendation from this Committee.

Thank you,

Dr. Dennis Sommers
Minot
Past President North Dakota Dental Association