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TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1300
Education Committee
January 31, 2023
Mark Vollmer, Superintendent
Minot Public Schools, Minot, ND

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education committee, my name is Mark Vollmer. I proudly serve as Superintendent of Minot Public School District #1 and Minot Air Force Base #160. I stand in front of you today to offer our support for HB 1300, a bill to amend section 57-15-16 of the North Dakota Century Code relating to tax levies for building funds in school districts.

The North Dakota Century Code section 57-15-16 allows school districts to levy up to 20 mills when authorized to do so by **sixty percent** of the qualified electors voting upon the question at a regular or special election in any school district. The language in HB 1300 would allow a district, such as Minot, to levy dollars without voter approval, to assist in maintaining school buildings which are significant in age and accordingly its aging infrastructure.

When school starts in the fall of 2024, the Minot Public School District will have 20 facilities in which students are educated. A majority of these facilities, if not all of them, are voter approved facilities, paid by the taxpayers of our school district. These 20 facilities are a substantial infrastructure investment in our community. HB 1300 would provide a financial means to keep these facilities maintained so they do not go into disrepair.

One mill in Minot currently generates approximately \$229,000 per year. If HB 1300 is approved, the Minot Public Schools would manage this levy capacity in conjunction with future debt service levies that are due to come off at the end of their bond life. The District would strive to not raise the mill levy and impact property tax owners.

The District currently maintains 12 facilities in which students are educated that are each **60 years of age or older**. These facilities need a number of improvements such as plumbing, electrical, HVAC, security and handicap accessibility. Since the Minot Public School District does not have a building fund, these expenses fall onto the General Fund. The current K-12 funding formula does not account for deferred maintenance. By using our General Fund to financially support aging infrastructure, dollars are being taken away from educational opportunities for the students in our District.

The Minot Public Schools strongly encourages your committee to recommend **“Do Pass”** for HB 1300 and will stand for any questions you may have.