



North Dakota Native Vote
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Testimony of Sharnell Seaboy regarding House Bill 1273
On behalf of North Dakota Native Vote
February 9, 2023
House Political Subdivisions Committee

Chairman and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Sharnell Seaboy. I am an enrolled citizen of the Mni Wakan Oyate (Spirit Lake Nation). I am a Field Organizer at North Dakota Native Vote and am here to testify in opposition to House Bill 1273 on behalf of North Dakota Native Vote.

North Dakota Native Vote is a non-partisan grassroots organization. Our mission is to create and affect policy to promote equitable representation for the Native people of North Dakota.

Ranked choice voting and approval voting are methods that are growing in popularity in the United States because many voters are looking for ways to increase voter participation, improve representation of voters' viewpoints, and decrease polarization. At this time, research of U.S. elections is inconclusive about how ranked choice voting and approval voting actually impact the outcomes of elections as to representation or polarization. Research does show that most voters are not confused by the process once they have participated in such elections.

For those reasons, North Dakota Native Vote does not have a position on ranked choice voting or approval voting in our elections. Our main concern about HB 1273 is that it would unnecessarily preempt local community decisions about how to run their own elections. State and federal governments do have an important role to ensure that every voter has the opportunity to vote, has easy access to voting, and that voting processes do not suppress the votes of certain groups of people. Therefore, at this time, ranked choice voting and approval voting appear to be decisions local communities can make, especially in a state that prides itself in bottom up democracy.

North Dakota Native Vote recommends a DO NOT PASS on House Bill 1531.

Pidamiya-ye (Thank you).