

House Bill 1424
House Political Subdivisions Committee
January 27, 2023

Chairman Longmuir and members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee. My name is Barbara Headrick, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the League of Women Voters of North Dakota in support of HB 1424, which would require federal, statewide, and state legislative candidates to file with a nongovernment issued email address.

HB 1424 would increase election transparency, allowing voters to more easily contact their candidates, and it would make it easier for us to invite candidates to fill out our voter guide.

In 2022, our nonpartisan voter guide covered all of the candidates running for office in North Dakota - over 2,000 in the June Primary and over 700 in the November General. Thanks to our partnership with Forum Communications, **over 20,000 people in North Dakota used our candidate information in 2022**, and we expect to reach even more voters in 2024.

This is how we invite candidates to complete our voter guide:

1. After the candidate filing deadline, we download the secretary of state's candidate list.
2. From this list, we email candidates an invite to respond to our candidate questions. If a candidate does not have an email address listed, we mail out an invite, but we have found response rates to letter invites to be quite low.
3. Candidates submit their responses themselves, which are published in our voter guide on www.VOTE411.org.

For the 2022 November Election, upwards of a quarter of statewide and state legislative candidates did not file with an email address, and even fewer filed with an email address for the 2022 June Primary.

When we tell people that federal, statewide, and state legislative candidates are not required to submit email addresses, they are surprised. Email addresses are ubiquitous now, and requiring candidate email addresses would make it easier for voters to contact their candidates.

HB 1424 would make our elections more transparent and help us provide nonpartisan candidate information to voters in 2024 and beyond. We urge you to give this bill a Do Pass recommendation. Thank you for the opportunity to share our testimony.

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