

1 HB1514 – Relating to the Threshold for Passing a Bond in a Municipality

2 Mandan Public Schools – Dr. Mike Bitz, Superintendent

3 Good afternoon Chairman Longmuir and members of the House Political
4 Subdivisions Committee. For the record, my name is Mike Bitz. I am
5 fortunate to serve as the superintendent for Mandan Public Schools. I am
6 here today in opposition to HB1514. I will be brief.

7 My dad is 87 years old, and he still shows up to work every day. Despite
8 only having an 8th grade education, he is the best teacher I ever had. One
9 of the lessons he taught me is that the world is run by the people who show
10 up. As legislators, you know this, you are sitting here in elected office
11 because you showed up, and your supporters showed up at a district
12 meeting. In many cases, less than 100 people of the 16,000+ that you
13 represent, showed up to a district meeting and voted for your nomination.
14 According to the ND Secretary of State's website, since 2014, statewide
15 turnout in the June primary elections has ranged from 17% to just over
16 27%. If you applied the same standard to your elections that this
17 legislation is requiring from municipalities, none of you would have even
18 advanced to the Nov. general election. The world is run by those who show
19 up and elections have consequences. This is not a bad thing. It allows our
20 municipalities and our state to move forward.

21 I live in Dist. 34, and I am a Republican. I have attended several of the
22 Dist. 34 meetings. I may be biased, but I think the Dist. 34 legislative team
23 is one of the best in the state. As great as they are, in the 2020 primary
24 Senator Larsen received 1,411 votes, Representative Porter receive 2,140

1 votes, and Representative Toman received 2,024 votes. Less than a year
2 later, the same people voted in a Mandan School District Referendum and
3 2,551 voted yes, while 726 voted no. 78% of Mandan voters approved
4 an \$84 million bond issue. If the legislature is concerned about low turnout
5 on an \$84M municipal project, I trust that you will be equally concerned
6 about even lower turnout at primary elections that send people to the
7 legislature to make decisions on billions of dollars.

8 I urge you to vote NO on HB1514, and I would be happy to answer any
9 questions you may have.