

Good morning esteemed members of the North Dakota State Legislature;

I'm writing you today to present my strong support for Senate Bill 2223. The small change being proposed will immeasurably strengthen districts 140 & 160 school board's ability to build continuity and consensus by addressing board member attrition rates.

Currently board membership is restricted to service members and spouses who, specifically, reside on-installation. Under current ND Century Code's (15.1-08-02) provision for board membership, District 140's school board has experienced at least one mid-term vacancy per year for the last seven years due to members being exempted for retiring from service or voluntarily moving off-installation even though said members continued to reside in the area and had/have children attending the on-installation schools. Additionally, the board's applicant field is further narrowed due to the availability of on-installation housing. There are a limited number of houses (filled first-come first-served) which forces off-installation residency when full, and creates another population of installation-connected service members who are unable to serve on the school board.

By allowing installation-connected service members/spouses and retirees/spouses who reside off-installation to serve on the school board will provide stability and continuity for the board, the district and most importantly for our students.

Thank you for your consideration and time,
Michelle Shepperd