



North Dakota House of Representatives

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Good Morning Madame Chair Roers and the State & Local Government committee,

My name is Steve Vetter representing district 18.

HB 1167 guarantees every county will have a physical polling location on the Election. If you look at the century code, you will find it already states there must be one physical polling location per county. However, this law guarantees it cannot be changed by executive override.

For example, a couple of election cycles ago, the primary election was mail-in only and did not allow for people to vote on Election Day which is contrary to tradition.

If an election needs to be mail-in only election because of an emergency, then a special session could be called, and the issue settled quickly. Especially with the newer approved technologies available because it could be done remotely. In the previous affected primary, there was plenty of time to call a special remote session.

Also, this bill is in no way an attack on our current Governor. This is about limiting the office's power to have the ability to limit the people's ability to vote in person for the Elections. Example: already has unlimited abilities when an emergency is called. This just deals with one small thing, having a physical polling location on Election Day to ensure all citizens that want to vote, can. Many voter were disenfranchised. On Election Day, there was nowhere that a voter could drop of their ballot. It had to be submitted the day before at minimum. Explain.

Elections are too important to be in the control of one person especially if that person is also running in that election. If a change like not having one physical polling location per county really needs to be changed because an emergency then the decision should be made by a consensus of the legislature not one person. Should a future governor have the ability to help his/her own election? Explain potential.

The opponents of this bill:

-They claim the the Governor needs to respond to emergency situations. The governor can respond. The only thing this bill deals with is one small aspect. Having 1 Physical polling location in a county. -They say they need this because when they had an all mail -in election before they claim they didn't have to time to prepare. Well, now they have lots of time now to prepare and the legislature has the ability to meet remotely. If the governor needs this power, all he/she would need to do is get the permission of the legislature.

-This bill is not about the auditors, read the bill, it is about the governor power to take away a law that is already in century code. I challenge you to ask the opponents of the bill where they see auditors anywhere in the bill. You won't find it, only the governor.

-The opponents will tell, we had to do this way. Ok, fine but what reason would you ever have to do it again considering the legislature has the ability to meet remotely in the future and now we have the hindsight of our actions.

-There nothing about this bill that deals with local control. The governor is the most powerful person in the state. There is nothing local about the governor having power to override existing law to take away the voting rights of individual citizens. It was the Governor's decision to allow the auditors to choose what they wanted. He could made a different decision by himself. The emergency powers give him all kinds latitude to suspend laws, however, this should not be one of those abilities.

Again, This bill guarantees there can't be an all mail-in election without having a minimum 1 physical polling location per county. This is a very simple but very important election integrity bill. I would ask that you give HB 1167 a favorable Do Pass recommendation. Thank you and I will stand for questions.