



North Dakota House of Representatives

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Chair Roers, Vice Chair Barta, and committee members,

I'm here to present HB 1257 regarding reporting campaign contributions for candidates seeking an elected position on a school district's school board. HC 1257 requires candidates for school board to file a campaign finance report, but only in districts where the student enrollment is over 750 students.

Currently, North Dakota law requires candidates for statewide office, the state legislature, county commission, and city commission to file campaign finance reports which include the total amount they receive and itemized donations of amounts over \$200. This bill would apply the exact same requirements to school board candidates in larger school districts, similar to how candidates for city commission races in larger cities must file a report.

This bill is the result of constituent's concerns following recent school board elections in both Grand Forks and Fargo. With greater interest in school board elections, and in campaign contributions that influence the elections, it makes sense to ask candidates to provide the source of their campaign funds. In the last election in Fargo, with no requirement regarding reporting of donations to school board candidates, the Forum asked candidates to share the information with them, which many of them did. It is in the voter's best interest to have this information.

The reports would be filed with the school district business manager 64 days prior to the election. School districts with a fall enrollment of 750 students or less would NOT have to file and would be exempt from this section. The reason for this is simple. In smaller communities it is hard enough to get candidates to run, and we do not want to discourage participation or add a burden to a small community.

There are currently 18 school districts in North Dakota that this would affect. If we were to put the requirement for reporting at 1000 students instead of 750, that would cut the list to 15 schools.

OF NOTE: This bill is very similar to House Bill 1116, with one important difference—HB 1257 limits the reporting requirement to school districts with an enrollment of over 750 students. HB 1257 passed the House with 72 yeas and 20 nays. HB 1116 passed the House with 55 yeas and 37 nays and would require districts with 500 or more students to file campaign contribution reports.

Considering the increased interest in school board elections, it is important to let voters know who is trying to influence their vote, and this bill does that.

That concludes my presentation and I welcome any questions you may have.

Respectfully,
Rep. Liz Conmy