

My name is Will Thompson, and I am a resident of Fargo North Dakota,

I am writing in opposition to House Bill 1273 and I ask the Political Subdivisions Committee to grant to this bill a Do Not Pass recommendation.

Approval voting was adopted by the City of Fargo by an overwhelming majority of voters in 2018. Through the powers vested in the city by the State under the Century Code's Home Rule Charter Act and in accordance with the rules of our Home Rule charter, the people of the City of Fargo showed their support for this voting method.

This bill would trample over the sovereignty and self governance of my community, as well as any community in North Dakota that in the future wished to implement voting methods that suit their needs better than the first past the post system. Not only would the freedoms of North Dakotans be curtailed if this bill passes, but they would be curtailed in a way many legislators believe would be unconstitutional. I also believe this to be the case.

The Century Code is very clear on this issue, cities with Home Rule Charters have a right to set policies, practices and laws that apply within their limits, and shall not be abridged by the state. If this bill were to pass, I guarantee a lawsuit would be filed, if not by the City of Fargo, then by individuals whose rights to self governance are being infringed upon (perhaps both). Perhaps the Big-Government supporters of this bill don't care about frivolous spending, but I do, and passing this bill will waste taxpayer money in defense of a bill that has no legality and will certainly be found unconstitutional.

There are many benefits of approval voting, one of which is allowing more interested people involved in the political process. I feel that this bill is a reactionary effort to stop people from getting involved, because the sponsors are scared of what will happen to them if citizens that might better represent North Dakotans aren't systematically discouraged from getting involved and running for public office. This bill feels designed to target voting methods that better express the will of the electorate than a first past the post system. We should be encouraging people to get involved in their government, not barring the doors.

I could write for a while on why approval voting (and other non first past the post) systems) better represent the will of the people, but there is plenty of easily findable research in the topic, and several others in the overwhelming majority of testimonials against this bill have done a good job. Instead I will link a YouTube video that dives into a few voting methods that this bill is targeting.

<https://youtu.be/oFqV2OtJOOg>

In summary, I am in opposition to House Bill 1273 and I ask the Political Subdivisions Committee to grant to this bill a Do Not Pass recommendation because HB 1273 is an unconstitutional infringement on the rights granted by the State to cities with Home Rule

Charters, and will waste taxpayer money by drawing suit in protection of the right of self sovereignty granted by the state.