

Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 1424
March 16, 2023
Senate State and Local Government Committee
Bill Wocken on behalf of the North Dakota League of Cities

Good morning, Chair Roers and members of the Senate State and Local Government Committee. For the record, my name is Bill Wocken, appearing on behalf of the North Dakota League of Cities in opposition to House Bill 1424.

This bill proposes requiring all candidates and their political committees to file their contact information with the Secretary of State, to include a nongovernment issued electronic mail address. Registration with the Secretary of State does not concern us, but the need to provide a nongovernment issued electronic mail address does cause concern when it is applied to candidates for local governing body seats in small cities.

It should come as no surprise to anyone, that finding candidates to run for local office is becoming more difficult. Some of our smaller cities report feeling fortunate when someone indicates an interest in local elected office, sometimes after considerable urging by constituents. Having to procure and provide an email address to the Secretary of State will keep some potential candidates from applying.

This bill seems to concentrate on district or state-wide candidates. If that were its' sole focus and candidates for local office in cities of less than 5,000 residents could be excluded, we would be able to live with this bill. In this case, one size does not fit all. If excluding local governing body candidates in cities of under 5,000 from this bill is not possible, the North Dakota League of Cities respectfully requests a Do Not Pass recommendation on this bill. I would be happy to try to answer any questions you might have for us.