

Testimony of Jeremy Neuharth

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Madame Chairman and distinguished members of the committee,

My name is Jeremy Neuharth, a North Dakota native who grew up on one of many family farms here in this great state. I am honored to be a veteran of the North Dakota Army National Guard, blessed to have a wonderful family, including two children, and proud to own a small business located in Fargo, North Dakota.

I am here today in **opposition of SCR 4012** as a citizen of North Dakota and as a state leader for the North Dakota Convention of States effort. Although I am happy to answer any questions about the merits of an Article V Convention, or address details regarding the passing of the original resolution (HCR 3006 in the 65th Assembly), I want to focus my testimony on why I believe this Legislative Assembly made the right decision three sessions ago.

A common tactic for Convention of States opposition is to create fear by stating a convention will cause chaos or will be out of control. We can pile in experts to refute such an outcome, but all of you, being involved in our state legislature, know there is a method to our political process. Parliamentary procedures, debates, votes, negotiations, and committees are all part of what some might identify as chaotic. We have amended our U.S. Constitution before. The only difference, in this case, is that the States are recommending the amendments instead of Congress. An option put in our Constitution by the Founders for states to use. Why should the states limit themselves from a power clearly given to them? I would argue the lack of state involvement at the Federal level is a core reason why we are having the problems we do today.

I find myself questioning, "Is there any part of my life where the Federal Government is not involved?" I would ask the committee members, "How many policy decisions for the citizens of North Dakota are dictated or heavily influenced by the Federal level?" Should the Federal Government be able to tell North Dakota how we should conduct our energy policy? Is the Federal Government better at managing North Dakotans? When does the neverending title wave of dictates from Washington, DC stop?

In my opinion, the most significant benefit of our COS resolution (HCR 3006) is to bring the voice of the states back into the decision making. Our Republic is so valuable because it allows different things to work for different people. Our goal should not be to create unity by requiring the conformity of all as determined

by the Federal Government. Our individual states are unique in their own ways; our different views and ways of living give our country its rich fabric. Therefore, deciding what is best for North Dakota citizens should not be established through the opinion of other states or the US Government at large. The US Constitution states in black and white that you have this power. We trust in you to use that power.

I also want to remind you I did not stand alone when the resolution was originally passed. At that time, we had **over 1,600 North Dakota citizens** across every district in the State of North Dakota supporting this resolution. Each one of those citizens with deep concerns regarding the direction of outside power and influence inflicted upon our state. In the legislature, we had twelve sponsors, including the Majority Leader from both chambers. The resolution endured through the process of committee hearings just like this, floor votes in both Chambers, open debate, and thoughtful discussion. We made a statement, as a state, regarding the need and desire to rein in the abuse of power and uncontrolled spending at the Federal level. In our last session, legislators reaffirmed our commitment by opposing a similar concurrent resolution (SCR 4004).

Without doubt, we did the right thing by passing the Convention of States resolution. We evaluated many options and took the constitutionally provided method to take back our voice. We live in the United States of America, and it's important to recognize how key the word "States" truly is. It is critical for the states to have their place in the system. It is time for us to have the freedom of diversity in thought and solutions. To those who want to maintain the status quo, North Dakota needs to make clear it wasn't an acceptable answer then, and we are not about to accept that answer now. I trust in our people, our Framers, and the Constitution. I trust you will join me in reaffirming we made the right choice by **opposing SCR 4012**.