



North Dakota House of Representatives

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COMMITTEES:

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TESTIMONY OF LAWRENCE R. KLEMIN HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3025 SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MARCH 23, 2023

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am Lawrence R. Klemin, Representative from District 47 in Bismarck. I am here today to testify in support of HCR 3025, which is a resolution directing Legislative Management to consider studying the feasibility and desirability of renovating the Liberty Memorial Building or constructing a new building on the Capitol grounds to serve as a new Supreme Court building.

The process for this resolution began as HB 1397, a bill for an appropriation to the Office of Management and Budget of \$55,000,000 for a new Supreme Court building. HB 1397 provided that OMB would procure architect and engineering services for the design of a Supreme Court building. After the design was approved, a project manager would be hired, construction contracts would be entered into, and construction would begin. The intention was to either remodel the Liberty Memorial Building and construct an addition on this building, or in the alternative, to construct an entirely new building on the Capitol grounds.

A space needs analysis had been done in 2014 by JLG Architects which concluded that the Supreme Court needed 53,392 square feet. As a result of the economic downturn in 2015, that project was never continued. The Supreme Court currently occupies 28,654 square feet of space in the Judicial Wing of the Capitol Building and is in need of more space for a courtroom, court chambers, offices, law library, and other space.

The House Judiciary Committee had recommended that the appropriation of \$55,000,000 be approved. However, the House Appropriations Committee determined that there was not enough information available at this time for approval of the construction project, so HB 1397 failed to pass the House. This resulted in the introduction of HCR 3025, which you have before you today.

During the next interim between the Sessions, the project for the Supreme Court building could be studied to obtain all of the information needed to present a

construction proposal to the 2025 Legislative Assembly. The Liberty Memorial Building is currently occupied by the State Library and the ND Parks and Recreation Department. Consequently, the study would also include a review of alternatives for the relocation of those two agencies. It might be concluded that a new building would be needed for the State Library if the Liberty Memorial Building is to be remodeled for the Supreme Court. Or it might be concluded that the Supreme Court should have an entirely new building constructed for its use somewhere on the Capitol grounds.

The study would include input from the Supreme Court, OMB, the State Library, ND Parks and Recreation, and the public through the interim committee process. If the Supreme Court does relocate to other space, this would free up the space in the Judicial Wing that it currently occupies, which could be used by the Legislature and other agencies.

Members of the Committee, I urge you to approve the interim study proposed in HCR 3025.

Rep. Lawrence R. Klemin