

**Testimony in Support for HB 1496**  
**Representative Austin Foss, District 44**

Chairperson Beltz and members of the agriculture committee, thank you for the opportunity to introduce House Bill 1496. HB 1496 provides much-needed clarification in our landlord obligation laws regarding reasonable heat standards.

This bill was brought to my attention by a constituent who will highlight in her testimony the struggles she is currently facing with heat in her rental this winter. Under current law, landlords are required to provide “reasonable heat,” but that term is not clearly defined in the North Dakota Century Code. This lack of clarity can lead to inconsistent expectations, difficulty in resolving disputes, and potential hardship for tenants in our state’s harsh winter conditions.

HB 1496 resolves this issue by establishing a clear and objective definition of “reasonable heat.” It ensures that from October 1st to April 30th, rental units must maintain a minimum temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit. This provides renters with a standard they can rely on while also giving landlords a clear and enforceable guideline to follow.

This bill is not about creating additional burdens—it is about ensuring transparency and fairness in landlord-tenant relationships. By eliminating ambiguity in the law, we can prevent unnecessary disputes, protect tenants from unsafe living conditions, and provide landlords with the clarity they need to comply with their obligations.

I urge the committee to support HB 1496 as a commonsense measure that benefits both renters and landlords across North Dakota. Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions you may have.