



January 15, 2025

Representative Nathe and Members of the House Appropriations Education and Environment Division,

My name is Andrea Placher, and I am the Library Director of the Williston Community Library. I am writing to express my support for HB 1013, particularly regarding the North Dakota State Library budget. The state library plays a crucial role in assisting us by providing valuable resources for our staff and our entire community.

In the most recent biennium, our library received three grants totaling \$11,413.82. These funds enabled us to introduce several exciting initiatives, including Wonderbooks (books that combine a physical book with a built-in audiobook), a teen makerspace, and a 9-hole miniature golf set. You may wonder how a miniature golf set relates to the library, and I assure you it connects perfectly to our mission.

As part of our strategic plan for 2022-2024, we aimed to attract more tweens and teens to the library. We consistently received feedback indicating that our programs were not sufficiently engaging for this age group. Our youth services team came together to brainstorm ideas and decided to take a bold approach. While the concept of a teen makerspace was well-received, we were uncertain how the North Dakota Coordinating Council would respond to our idea of a miniature golf set. To our delight, they embraced it wholeheartedly.

A few months later, we hosted our first summer reading sign-up event featuring the golf set. We registered 88 tweens and teens, a remarkable increase from last year's registration of only 25 participants. The community's reaction was overwhelmingly positive. Adults began asking when we would hold a golf event just for them, and the miniature golf set has since become a staple at all our major events and programs. We even featured it during our golf-themed 2024 Tables of Contents Fundraiser.

The State Library not only provides grant opportunities but also offers crucial state aid, which is essential for our library's revenue. Over the past three years (2022-2024), our library has received a total of \$93,650.78, averaging \$31,216.93 annually. This funding supports many vital services, including the salaries of three part-time staff members, which allows us to maintain evening and weekend hours; a year's worth of heating and electricity for our building; and approximately one thousand new books to add to our collection. The benefits of this funding are numerous. Without state aid, our library and the community we serve would face significant challenges.

We are also excited about the State Library's recent initiative: the Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Bridge. Last year alone, we requested 348 items from other libraries, of which 181 were requested

from other states. We currently pay for ILL software, and I'm sure you are aware that postage costs have significantly increased in recent years. The cost savings and ease of use will free up resources that can be used for additional library services.

The funding, support, and enthusiasm from the State Library and its staff have greatly benefited the residents of Williams County.

Sincerely,



Andrea Placher
Library Director