

January 26, 2025

Dear Chair Nathe and members of the House Appropriations Education and Environment Division Committee,

I writing today in support of HB 1013.

All of the agencies represented in this bill do immeasurable good work for North Dakotans of all ages, abilities, and demographics.

The State Library for instance, helps connect rural populations with educational resources, as well as helps public libraries across the state with technology support and training. My father grew up near Petersburg, ND and was voted by his high school as “class bookworm.” This no doubt came about because as a young boy, he was able to access large quantities of reading materials by receiving books through the State Library’s interlibrary loan program. This was facilitated by former ND State Librarian - Hazel Webster Byrnes, who was a neighbor and family friend.

I also want to mention the Talking Book program through the State Library, which is an especially important piece of the State Library’s work and makes reading accessible for hundreds of vision impaired North Dakotans. One such North Dakotan is my great-aunt, who has been dealing with macular degeneration for years. She has been borrowing books through the State Library for over ten years now, and she has expressed to me on several occasions that the program has helped improve her quality of life.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I ask that you vote in favor of HB 1013.

Respectfully,
Mariah Ralston