



1 **Support and Amendment Request House Bill No. 1387 - School Closures on Election Days**

2 We are here wishing to support the bill but are needing to ask for a much needed amendment
3 which allows school districts the flexibility to either cancel classes or segregate students to
4 ensure no opportunity for student contact with voters when a school is used as a polling place, is
5 a necessary and prudent measure to ensure the safety and security of our students while
6 maintaining the integrity of the election process.

7 Current bill language:

8 4. The board of a school district ~~may direct that classes not be held on~~ shall cancel
9 classes on the day of a national, statewide, or local election if the school is used as a
10 polling place on that day during regular school hours.

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12 **Would you please consider:**

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14 4. The board of a school district ~~may direct that classes not be held on~~ shall cancel
15 classes or shall segregate the students to ensure there is no opportunity for student
16 contact with the voters on the day of a national, statewide, or local election if the school is
17 used as a polling place on that day during regular school hours.

18 **Rationale for the Amendment:**

19 **Student Safety and Security:**

20 Schools are designed primarily for educational purposes, and the influx of the general public
21 during elections introduces potential security concerns. Ensuring that students have no contact
22 with voters minimizes the risk of unauthorized individuals entering restricted areas and enhances
23 overall school safety.

24 With rising concerns about school security across the nation, this amendment provides school
25 districts with the choice to either cancel classes or implement segregation measures to protect
26 students, offering flexibility in addressing unique school layouts and security needs.

27 **Operational Efficiency:**

28 The presence of voters and election officials can disrupt the normal functioning of a school,
29 impacting student learning and staff operations.

30 Traffic congestion, noise levels, and restricted access to facilities create logistical challenges that
31 hinder the educational environment.

32 Providing districts with the choice between closing schools or segregating students allows for a
33 tailored approach that best fits their operational capabilities and ensures minimal disruption.



1 **Voter Access and Experience:**

2 The amendment ensures that polling places remain accessible and welcoming to voters without
3 the added complexities of navigating around students and school activities.

4 Allowing school districts to implement student segregation measures rather than mandating
5 closures enables continued use of schools as polling places while ensuring voter convenience and
6 security.

7 **Legal and Liability Considerations:**

8 Allowing students and voters to share space may expose the district to liability risks in the event
9 of accidents, security breaches, or other incidents.

10 The proposed amendment provides clear guidance and legal protection for school districts by
11 offering options to comply with best practices for public safety.

12 **Conclusion:**

13 In conclusion, the amendment to provide school districts with the flexibility to either cancel
14 classes or segregate students on election days when schools are used as polling places is a critical
15 step in safeguarding both students and voters. It supports a secure and focused educational
16 environment while upholding the democratic process in a manner that prioritizes safety and
17 operational efficiency. We strongly encourage the passage of this amendment to reinforce our
18 commitment to the well-being of North Dakota students.

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