

This bill seems like a bad idea. Are high school sports in North Dakota about teamwork and community or are they about funneling talent to a handful of elite schools who then compete for a state championship? North Dakota recently switched to a 3 tier system for Basketball and Volleyball to try and level the playing field a little. Over the past 10 years, some small schools have gotten smaller and some medium schools have grown until it's not really a fair competition between a school like Larimore (where I coach) and Grafton or Thompson (who regularly have more 9th graders out for a sport than total 9-12 kids, like in my school). The switch to a 3 tier system was fair for everyone. Good programs with strong community support will still be successful.

Now look at the power a town like Grafton could wield due to a business like Marvin Windows if this bill passes. Any top-tier athlete in a 100 mile radius (or more) gets an invite to play for Grafton. Their parent(s) get a job at Marvin and they live in an apartment (probably built to house athletes like this) until the athlete graduates. Then the parents either move back or stay in Grafton (which grows more). Colleges only have to recruit from a small handful of schools, all of the sifting of talent has already been done for them.

The NCAA Volleyball transfer portal rules are similar to this bill and there is a lot of discussion right now about how the trend is elite athletes playing one season at a small school as a 'try out' and then transferring to a bigger program. The ultimate result is that the same 5 or 6 schools would compete for the national championship every year with other schools acting as farm systems for them. I would hate to see high school sports in North Dakota follow this trend. Please vote No.