

TESTIMONY ON HB1420
FINANCE AND TAXATION COMMITTEE
MARY J. SOUCIE, STATE LIBRARIAN

Representative Headland and Members of the Committee,

For the record, I am State Librarian Mary Soucie, and I would like to provide information and support for HB1420. The North Dakota Library Coordinating Council (NDLCC) is the Governor appointed Advisory Board for the State Library. The 11-member council includes representatives from public, academic, and K-12 school libraries, the North Dakota Library Association President or President's Designee, two at-large librarians, and two at-large citizens. The State Librarian is a non-voting ex officio member. The NDLCC operates under Century Code chapter §54-24-4.

The State Library receives general fund dollars to administer the Library Vision grant program and the State Aid to Public Libraries grant program. The NDLCC reviews and awards the Library Vision grants. The State Library staff administers the State Aid for Public Libraries grant program in accordance with Century Code chapter §54-24.2.

The State Library receives federal funds from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Library and Services Technology Act (LSTA). The State Library adopts and evaluates a five-year plan in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Institute for Museum and Library Services. The State Librarian has the authority to distribute grants to libraries within the limits of legislative appropriations per §54-24-03(17). The state library staff will review and award grant applications with federal funds as we have been doing and as the federal program allows for.

HB1420 clarifies that the Library Coordinating Council approves the awarding of state funded grants, excepting the State Aid for Public Libraries grant program. The Library Coordinating Council meets quarterly to review and award Library Vision grants and to provide input to the State Library on our services and programs. The Council meets at least twice per year in person and tours local libraries to gain insight into the needs of the libraries and to assess the impact of the grants. The State Library generally opens the grant opportunities three times per fiscal year. This may vary depending on the amount of funds that are expended each time. Occasionally, we will offer a fourth grant opportunity. Having to meet additional times to award federal grants would make it more difficult for representatives from our small and rural public and K-12 school libraries to serve on the council since they are often one or two person libraries. The language change in HB1420 related to the Library Coordination Council's duties will provide clarity to the North Dakota library community and the Council members.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions.