

v e t t e r

Legislative Assembly

North Dakota House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Representative Steve Vetter

District 18
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COMMITTEES:

Judiciary (Vice Chair)
Government and Veterans Affairs

Chairman Headland and the Tax & Finance Committee,

My name is Steve Vetter, I represent district 18, eastern part of Grand Forks along the Red River. It has a little rural area going as far north as Manvel, ND.

HB 1532 is a bill that gives every legislator one staff person for the 4 months during session. The staff person would receive a salary of \$5,000/month for the 4 months of session (2.94 million) and their choice of a laptop or iPad. (Same arrangement as legislators except just 1).

Started working on this concept a little over a year ago...I have looked at the other plans through the interim committee. However, none of these plans have personal staff.

Committee, this bill is more than just having some extra help. Especially now with terms limits, the legislative branch has become by far the weakest of the 3 branches of government when we should be the strongest branch as we are the branch closest to the people. Having staff support makes us stronger and more effective. Many here might not need a staff at this time but in the future it will be all the new legislators (with maximum 8 years of experience) with no experienced legislators (10-20 years experience) around anymore to guide the process and have institutional knowledge in different subject areas. They will need staff to be knowledgeable, effective and maintain institutional knowledge. We have an obligation to make the future legislature as strong as possible.

Because of Term Limits it is now needed. Instead of fighting the current system, let's make it the best it can be under the circumstances we are given.

1. Jump Start new legislators: With only 8 years in office, a person must learn quickly and be up to speed right away. Currently it takes a session just to learn

what is going on, now they only have 3 sessions left. You only have one chance every 2 years to get a bill right.

2. We must maintain Institutional Knowledge: Trained staff working for the legislators maintains institutional knowledge otherwise lost.
3. More informed and knowledgeable legislature leads to better laws.
4. Effectiveness of the Legislators. Be all you can be. Look at everything you do now. Imagine if you could multiple yourself. I envision legislators getting someone compliment their objectives as a legislator. For example: the Speaker might want a parliamentarian, Chair of Judiciary might want someone knowledgeable in the law. Someone in Tax Committee would need someone really smart. Or maybe you are like the chairman and you are near perfect, maybe your staff person's job is to communicate back to your constituents how great you are. Just like we all have different objective goals, we would all we would all want different objectives from a staff person.
5. Elected should be making the decisions and setting policy versus the Bureaucracy: Citizens can hold elected officials accountable but can't do anything about the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy has a vested interest in their own wellbeing, not the individual wants and needs of the citizens. We need staff that are working directly for us and therefore the people of our individual districts.

Thank you to the legislators that have been here awhile and the legacy you have given us. North Dakota has long had the tradition of a citizen legislature, unfortunately with term limits the legislature will need to change to keep a similar promising legacy to continue that you built. The way we do that is with knowledgeable and informed legislators.

Objections: Available space. Cost

We need this bill or the future legislative branch will become an operating arm of the bureaucracy and the lobbyists. Give the future legislature a fighting chance. The future of North Dakota is in your hands. Please make the right choice and vote for a Do Pass recommendation on HB 1532. Thank you and I will stand for questions.

Communications Specialist - Graphic Designer

An individual in this position will supplement the other communications specialist position; create images for the website and other media; and design visual aids, booklet covers, report covers, newsletters, digital signage, posters, and informational brochures.

One individual in 2027 is proposed to be added for this position.

Webmaster

An individual in this position will maintain, develop, and organize website pages, views, and content; monitor the website for broken links; fix error codes; run updates and migrations; and ensure Americans with Disabilities Act compliance of content and format.

One individual in 2027 is proposed to be added for this position.

COST OF ADDITIONAL STAFF POSITIONS

The following table provides the estimated salary range for each of the positions proposed to be added to the Legislative Council staff in 2025-27 and 2027-29 bienniums.

Additional Positions Proposed for 2025 and 2027			
Number		Position Title	Salary Range
2025	2027		
Legal Services Positions			
1	1	Legal Counsel	\$90,000 - \$105,600
6	4	Policy Analyst	\$64,800 - \$85,800
	1	Policy Director	\$85,000 - \$105,000
2	1	Legislative Editor	\$48,200 - \$59,400
1		Human Resources Specialist	\$64,800 - \$79,200
	1	Human Resources Manager	\$86,400 - \$105,600
Fiscal Services Positions			
1	1	Fiscal Analyst	\$85,000 - \$105,600
4	1	Program Evaluator	\$64,800 - \$85,800
	1	Program Evaluations Director	\$85,000 - \$105,000
	2	Accounting Specialist	\$49,500 - \$60,500
Information Technology Services Positions			
1		Website Platform Administrator	\$81,000 - \$99,000
1		Cybersecurity Specialist	\$81,000 - \$99,000
2		Application Support Specialist	\$64,800 - \$79,200
1		Assistant Information Technology Manager	\$124,200 - \$151,800
1	1	Information Technology Specialist	\$54,000 - \$72,600
1	3	Legislative Information Technology Developer	\$64,800 - \$85,800
	1	Business Analyst	\$81,000 - \$99,000
	2	Server Administrator	\$75,600 - \$92,400
	1	Information Technology Trainer	\$54,000 - \$66,000
Administrative Services and Operations Positions			
1		Front Desk Specialist	\$45,000 - \$52,800
1	2	Administrative Specialist I	\$45,000 - \$59,400
1		Communications Specialist	\$54,000 - \$66,000
	1	Communications Specialist - Graphic Designer	\$64,800 - \$79,200
	1	Webmaster	\$64,800 - \$79,200

The total estimated cost of adding 25 staff members in 2025 is approximately \$6 million. The total estimated cost of adding an additional 25 staff members in 2027 is approximately \$6 million. These estimates are inclusive of all costs, including salary, benefits, training, and equipment.