

HB 1286
Testimony in opposition.

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee.

I am writing to you to respectfully request a Do Not Pass recommendation from this committee on House Bill 1286.

While I sympathize with the sentiment of the authors of this bill, in that transparency in government is almost always a good thing, I feel this bill is a step too far in a number of ways.

First, to me, the monetary tracing requirements seem to be nearly impossible for the average person to follow correctly. The amount of paperwork required by this bill would force many "covered persons" to have to hire a compliance officer/accountant just to satisfy the requirements of this bill.

Second, the definition of "covered persons" is extremely vague, and could easily include many more individuals than the authors intend.

Third, tasking the Secretary of State with not only investigation, but also enforcement, would put a massive strain on the SOS office, and likely require several dedicated employees just to deal with complaints under this section.

Fourth, under line 13 of page 6, an entirely new type of donation is created: one with strings attached. I am not aware of any other place in law where one can make a donation to an organization or entity, and then retain control over how their funds are spent. On the surface this seems to be a good idea, but it is a dangerous path to take.

Fifth, the changes under section 6 would have a significant negative impact on political advertisements, particularly those which are audio based. The requirement to include the top three donors (besides the fact that the advertisement itself may not be directly approved by the donors) would take a significant amount of expensive airtime for both television and radio ads, thus reducing the effectiveness and raising the cost of advertising.

As a whole, this bill seems completely unworkable and overly complex. I respectfully request a Do Not Pass recommendation from this committee.

Sincerely,

Andrew Bornemann
Kintyre, ND