

HB 1286 dark money

& Veterans

Chairman Schaur and members of the ~~Veterans~~ and Government Affairs Committee

For the record, my name is Mike Schatz from New England and I am a representative from District 39 which is the far southwest corner of our great state.

I am here today to try to get you to vote favorable for HB 1286 which I like to call the "dark money" bill. My main premise is to have a level playing field for candidates and Political Action Committees. Both of which are trying to influence elections.

HB 1286 is divided into six sections. The bill is 11 pages but the keys are section 2 and section 3. Section 1 is made up of definitions of 24 words or phrases. One main phrase is "covered person" which means any person that spends more than \$200 in an election cycle on expenditures.

In very general terms, a 'covered person' must disclose any amount of money over \$200 which is received. The people who gave the money must have their names listed and it will go on the Sec. of States website for all of us to see, just like all legislators and statewide officials have to do. Since they are trying to influence an election and we are trying to as well, it only seems fair.

The investigation and keeping of records will be handled by the Sec. of State. If a person has evaded the reporting requirements, they are guilty of a Class A misdemeanor. Section 4 deals with complaints, Sec. 5 defines civil actions, and Sec. 6 talks about political advertisements.

The reason this bill was put forward was to answer this question: Who is trying to influence my vote? Why are they trying to influence my vote? Why are they so secretive about it? What do they have to gain? What are they trying to hide?

Most people in North Dakota want to know. People are tired of mailers. Mailers that are nasty, negative, and nonsense. People are tired of half truths and of candidates that tell half-truths. They want the "dark money" brought into the light. Just like the candidates have to do.

This bill will be a start in the right direction. Montana passed a bill that is very similar to this one and it had a very positive affect on cleaning up election. Chairman Schaur and members of the Government and Veterans Affairs committee, I hope you will give a do pass to hb 1286. Thank you and I will answer questions.