

February 5, 2025

House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee
HB 1446

Chairman Schauer and Committee members:

Let the record reflect my **opposition** to House Bill 1446 (“HB 1446”), as introduced by Representatives Nathe, D. Anderson, Berg, Bosch, Longmuir, Nelson, Porter, Swiontek and Senators Bekkedahl, Devel, Roers, and Cleary.

The notion of eliminating political party endorsements to usher in more independence of, and objective decision making from, candidates for political office makes for a popular talking point. HB 1446 not only would accomplish neither of these objectives, it would permanently entrench a monied political class and disenfranchise and engaged citizenry.

Political parties are voluntary associations of electors coming together to advance collectively held values by nominating, and holding accountable, representatives. This is vital to the self-governance creed that underpins our representative republic. Moving solely to a petition driven, primary candidacy, with a significantly higher bar for the number of petitioners, will have numerous, negative consequences such as:

- Absolves the candidate of accountability to elected representatives of the populace
- Creates an environment in which financial access to mass media is a necessity for electability
- Ensures a financial windfall to these same media outlets, and by proxy, gives a relative few disproportionate representation
- Fosters an environment in which political positions are purchased
- Effectively eliminates the viability of grassroots, interpersonal politicking
- Moves North Dakota dangerously down the path away from a representative republic towards the mob-rule inevitability of a true democracy

We cannot expect to have an educated populace actively engaged in self-governance if we reduce the role of the citizen solely to that of a periodic voter. It leads to apathy, which provides a breeding ground for dictatorial governance. Those involved in local party politics tend to be the most informed and engaged members of the electorate. HB 1446 disenfranchises the very types of citizens who take self-governance the most seriously.

I strongly request a **“Do NOT pass”** recommendation from the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee.

Respectfully,

Matthew S. Simon