

## Testimony in Support of HCR 3003

For the record, my name is Naomi Bromke. I am a first-year student at the University of North Dakota School of Law. I was born and raised in Bismarck, North Dakota. I have been active in my community since I have been very young and have seen firsthand the political shifts in our state.

HCR 3003 is a necessary amendment to prevent the manifestation of injustice to our state. The United States is a constitutional republic, which lets the people by their own free will elect someone they believe will represent their and their communities' interests. We do not have a direct democracy, which would let the largest population rule over the smaller ones. North Dakotans, in my opinion, would be deeply distraught at the undermining of their voice and its power if the United States became a direct democracy. Our state's population cannot compare with the other states, and it would, essentially, take away any impactful say in public policy from the people of North Dakota. This sentiment is downscaled to counties on the state level.

The people, as by our constitutional republic, have the power to elect people that will best represent their interests. If we do not enact HCR 3003, it will lead towards bigger cities, like Fargo, Bismarck, and Grand Forks, taking greater control of our state. The interests of rural North Dakotans are quite different to those who reside in urban areas. This would take away power from the people that keep our state running—rural farmers, people that work in the oilfield, etc.

The North Dakota Constitution should not be as easily changeable as an ordinary law. The Constitution is a much higher governing authority than a simple law, as it both defines the scope of government authority and, very importantly, the *limits* on that government authority so to protect the natural, God-given rights of the people. Because of this fact, it should be harder to change. According to Ballotpedia, there are 26 states that allow for citizens to have the power of initiative. Out of these states, eight do not allow for constitutional changes. That is roughly 36% of the United States that allows for citizens to initiate a constitutional change. Out of the states that do allow for citizen petitions to change the constitution, Florida and Illinois requires a 60% majority; Massachusetts requires that the petition must receive at least 30% of the total number of ballots cast in the election and a majority of the voters voting on the measure; Mississippi requires the number of votes in favor of an initiative must be equal to or more than 40% of the total votes cast at the election; Montana requires a majority and at least 35% of the total votes cast in the entire election; Nebraska requires the petition has to be signed by ten percent of registered voters; Nevada requires a majority of voters are two consecutive elections; and Oregon requires a majority only, but the election must have at least 50% voter turnout. 10 states are left with less stringent requirements, leaving 20% of the United States allowing citizen petitions to change state constitutions by a simple majority.

It is evident that most states in our union believe that state constitutions should not be easily changed. This amendment is not asking for a high threshold either: 60% is more than reasonable. If we are to best protect our entire state's interests, I recommend a do-pass on HCR 3003. Thank you for your consideration.