

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HCR 3003**

House Government and Veteran Affairs on House Concurrent Resolution 3003

Date of Hearing: January 16, 2025

Debra L. Hoffarth, 1320 11th Street SW, Minot, ND 58701

This written testimony is presented in opposition to House Concurrent Resolution 3003, which proposes a change to the initiative petition process under Section 9 of Article III of North Dakota's Constitution and amendment of the Constitution under Section 16 of Article IV of North Dakota's Constitution. The proposed legislation is another attempt by the North Dakota Legislature to prevent the will of the people and limit the ability of citizens to participate in the government.

The Legislature has introduced similar proposals to limit the initiative petition process in prior legislative sessions. Rather than revisiting the attacks on the initiative petition process, I urge the Legislature to focus on pressing issues such as strengthening the economy, improving access to health care, expanding affordable daycare, addressing property tax concerns, supporting our seniors and children, infrastructure, and tackling rising health care costs and inflation. Addressing these critical matters would reduce the perceived need for citizens to pursue initiated measures. The increase in the initiative petitions in recent years reflects a response to unmet needs and a lack of faith in the legislative process.

The right of North Dakota citizens to bring initiative petitions has been enshrined in our Constitution since 1914 (<https://vip.sos.nd.gov/pdfs/Portals/history-initiative-referendum-nd.pdf>). Protecting North Dakotans' constitutional rights is vital, especially as trust in political institutions can waver when priorities seem to align more with special interests than with the lived experiences of the everyday North Dakotan.

I respectfully urge you to uphold our long-time democratic ideals and oppose House Concurrent Resolution 3003.



Debra L. Hoffarth