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TESTIMONY OF DAVID HOGUE IN SUPPORT SCR 4007
HOUSE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Pioneer Room; 8:30 AM
March 14, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Schauer and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name is David Hogue. I am a North Dakota state senator representing District 38, which includes northwest Minot, the city of Burlington, and the western half of the Minot Air Force Base. I appear before your committee to seek support for Senate Concurrent Resolution 4007.

SCR 4007 is a proposed state constitutional amendment that limits initiated constitutional amendments to a single subject. It would limit both the legislature and the people from proposing constitutional amendments that propose more than one subject.

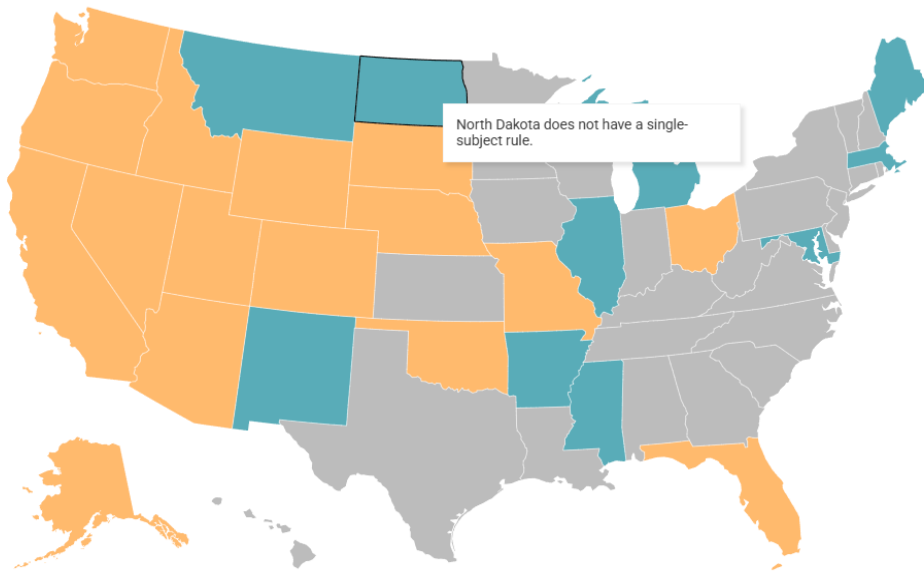
I know your Committee is acquainted with Article III of our state constitution, having received and reviewed other constitutional amendments related to amending our initiative process, including HCR 3003, a proposed constitutional amendment to raise the threshold for passing constitutional amendments from a simple majority to 60%.

The majority of states that permit constitutional amendments limit constitutional amendments to a single subject.

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Single-subject rule for state ballot initiatives

Single-subject rule
Yes No No I&R



Last updated: September 2023

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3 I submit the single subject limitation is necessary for constitutional ballot
4 measures for several reasons. First, ND voters do not receive a copy of the ballot
5 measure under current law. While the content of ballot measures is available on line,
6 the simple reality is that the vast majority of voters do not read the entire ballot
7 measure. Instead, they rely on a summary of the ballot measure that is prepared by the
8 collective work of our ND Attorney General and ND Secretary of State. That summary
9 is simply not enough information to be voting on constitutional measures. I would pose
10 the question to all of you: would you be comfortable in voting on the house floor based
11 only the summary of the bill in the title? For me, the answer is no. I would not want to
12 vote on a constitutional amendment that contains several different subjects based on a
13 summary of those separate proposals.

1 The single subject rule helps limit the content and complexity of constitutional
2 amendments by holding the drafter and sponsors to focus on a single subject that is
3 readily understandable by the voters. SCR 4007 would permit the North Dakota
4 Secretary of State to determine whether the proposed measure encompasses more
5 than one subject.

6 A second reason to limit proposed constitutional measures to a single subject
7 relates to avoiding confusion and outright deception of voters. The single subject rule
8 prohibits the so-called "bait and switch" tactic. What I mean by that is some proponents
9 of measures draft lengthy measures that have broad-based appeal in the introductory
10 pages, e.g., a measure to help veterans, but much later on in the measure the
11 proponents "switch" to the primary objective of the measure. Again, because the
12 overwhelming majority of voters are not reading the measure in its entirety, I argue it's
13 unfair to switch subjects in the same measure.

14 I would like to request that the measure be amended to permit this proposal to be
15 placed on the June primary ballot of 2026. I would also like to propose that the
16 measure not be supplemented with other initiative reform like, e.g., a super majority of
17 votes or other reforms. This measure, properly understood by the voters, will pass as a
18 standalone measure.

19 I would be happy to address your questions Chairman Schauer. Thank you for
20 your consideration.

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