



NORTH DAKOTA

Family Alliance LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1144

Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director
North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action
January 27, 2025

Dear Chairman Ruby and honorable members of the House Human Services Committee,

My name is Mark Jorritsma, and I am the Executive Director of North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action. I am testifying on behalf of our organization in support of House Bill 1144 and respectfully request that you render a “DO PASS” on this bill.

Over the past few years, it has become apparent that schools, either through ignorance, lack of motivation, or willful defiance, do not always follow recently enacted portions of the Century Code that apply to them. An obvious case of this latter situation was the statement by the Superintendent of the Fargo Public School District that they would not comply with portions of HB 1522 from last session, now enacted in §14-02.4-15.2 and §15.1-06-21 of our Century Code.

Was there any consequence of this defiance? There was none, to my knowledge.

Sadly, it appears that further clarification and stipulations must be put into law to ensure entities such as the Fargo School District cannot openly defy North Dakota law. Further, it is clear from how things transpired in this situation, that there must be some consequence for this type of action. HB 1144 accomplishes these objectives, thus, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action supports it.

I am not a legislator, and I am thankful for that, because you have a far more difficult job than I do. However, what disturbs me is that all your work on HB 1522 was of no consequence to one of the largest school districts in the state and enacting it into the Century Code failed to change their behavior. Those responsible for educating our children need to understand that laws are not merely suggestions, they are requirements. There are 141 of you in this body who have made a commitment to represent North Dakotans by creating laws that improve our quality of life and preserve our values. Let’s ensure that happens.

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North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action requests that you render a “DO PASS” on House Bill 1144. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony, and I’d be happy to stand for any questions.

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