

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1548

January 24, 2025

Chairman Matthew Ruby and Members of the Human Services Committee:

Good afternoon. My name is Bill Dahl, and I serve as the Director of Grafton Parks and Recreation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 1548.

The need for this new facility in our community is clear. The State-owned and -run Collette Fitness Center has served the region for 57 years. While it has been a valuable resource, the facility is aging out and no longer meets the needs of modern users. As Director of Grafton Parks and Recreation, I have been approached twice by the Life Skills and Transition Center (LSTC) to take over operations of the Collette Fitness Center. However, the challenges posed by its outdated infrastructure highlight the urgent need for a new solution.

This project represents a collaborative effort involving the Grafton Park Board, City of Grafton, private donors, and the State of North Dakota. The State's participation is a critical component, not only in advancing this project but also in ensuring it serves the future needs of the LSTC. Over the past 16 years, Grafton Parks and Recreation has partnered with the State to repurpose nearly 100 acres of LSTC property, demonstrating our ability to create community assets while significantly reducing LSTC's footprint on the State budget.

By supporting House Bill 1548, you are ensuring that the needs of the LSTC and the broader community are met now and into the future. I respectfully urge you to approve this critical funding and help us bring this transformative project to fruition.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Bill Dahl
Director, Grafton Parks and Recreation