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**Testimony of Chad Ruzicka in support of HB 1548  
To the House Human Services Committee  
Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Representative Ruby and members of the Human Services Committee, my name is Chad Ruzicka.

I am a life-long resident of Grafton and have been employed by Grafton Public Schools for the past 31 years and have had the pleasure of serving as the district Director of Facilities for the past 19 years. I am a member of the International Facility Manager's Association and have my own consulting business in which I assist other K-12 school districts across North Dakota and Minnesota through facilities assessments which often result in the need for large capital improvements, which I in turn oversee the design and construction of these projects. Facilities are my passion, and I study them each day so I can bring the best possible outcomes to those I assist.

I support HB 1548. After studying the overall conditions of the Collette Fitness Center on the Life Skills and Transition Center Campus (Constructed in 1967, 57 years old) and the Lestikow Park Pool, it is very clear that substantial capital improvements are needed at both facilities. While the State has been good stewards of the upkeep of the Collette Fitness Center, it is very difficult to deny the fact that the caustic and corrosive chemicals associated with pools, the lack of adequate ventilation for that type of use and the overall wear and tear of this era of facility, have taken their toll on the facilities.

By establishing funding for this project, you will open doors to a modern, energy-efficient multi-use facility that will be able to be utilized by residents from the Life Skills and Transition Center as well as the residents from the entire Northeast Region of North Dakota and beyond. New Americans with Disabilities code will be followed closely if designed so everyone regardless of capability will be able to enjoy the new facility for years to come. The Northeast Region needs a facility of this nature to offer constituents a year-round option for full health and wellness well-being.

Each day that school is in session, we have a group of about ten students that are residents of the Life Skills and Transition Center that attend school in our facility that assist us in maintaining our facility through assigned tasks which help them to learn lifelong skills. It has been fun to watch these students interact with other students and see the friendships they have developed due to being included in public instruction. I think it is awesome to see these students, no matter their abilities, be included and lead meaningful lives. I feel that by having a modern wellness center would be the perfect way to promote the interaction of the LSTC residents with the public through facilities usage

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and new programming opportunities presented through the addition of this new facility. With the current facilities, significant barriers which are present merely due to the age of the facilities are not able to be overcome without a well-planned new facility which will be able to be enjoyed by all.

This project will serve as a catalyst for our entire region, and I am excited to see all the ways in which the Grafton Public Schools can collaborate with all end users to utilize this facility to its full intent. The timing is right to explore adding such a facility and, with your support, I feel it is very attainable. Thank you for your consideration and support of HB 1548.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chad Ruzicka". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chad Ruzicka, IFMA CFM  
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