

Testimony in Support of House Bill No. 1438
Presented by Patrick Kirby

Chairman Warry, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of House Bill No. 1438. My name is Patrick Kirby, I'm a small business owner from West Fargo, and my day job is working with nonprofit organizations across North Dakota and the Midwest to raise funds. For over twenty years, I've had the privilege of helping organizations and communities leverage opportunities like this matching grant to transform their most beloved spaces into thriving hubs of culture, history, and economic vitality.

The matching grant proposed in House Bill No. 1438 is a proven strategy that creates momentum, inspires generosity, and energizes campaigns like the Fargo Theatre's Centennial Capital Campaign. Matching grants work because they double the impact of every dollar raised, signaling to donors that their contributions will go even further. In my two decades of fundraising experience, matches like this one are catalytic—they not only accelerate the number of gifts being donated, but also bring new supporters to the table, creating a ripple effect of community investment.

This body has a long and proud history of supporting iconic and historic projects across North Dakota. From restoring landmarks to funding cultural assets, you have recognized the value these projects bring to our communities. The Fargo Theatre is no exception. Its presence in downtown Fargo has been a cornerstone of our state's cultural identity for nearly a century. A matching grant for the Theatre aligns perfectly with your legacy of preserving history while investing in the future.

But the Fargo Theatre is more than a historic building—it's a place where memories are made and communities come together. For me, those memories include one of the amazing moments of my life as a parent: watching my daughter dance on the Fargo Theatre stage.

I sat in that historic auditorium, surrounded by neighbors, friends, and strangers, all brought together to watch our kids dance their heart out on a stage that was 90 years older than them. And let me tell you, it's a lot better than watching similar programs in a loud gymnasium. And their popcorn is better too.

That's the power of the Fargo Theatre. It's not just a venue to see classic and new release movies or your favorite band or comedian; it's a living, breathing symbol of who we are and what we value as North Dakotans.

As we approach the Theatre's centennial, the timing of this matching grant couldn't be more significant. It's an opportunity to honor the Theatre's history while ensuring it remains a vibrant part of our future. With your support, the Fargo Theatre can continue to inspire, connect, and energize our community for the next 100 years.

Thank you for considering this investment in one of North Dakota's most cherished cultural treasures. I urge you to recommend a DO PASS of House Bill No. 1438 and help ensure that the Fargo Theatre remains a beacon of art, history, community – and dance recitals - for generations to come.

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District 13