

Opposition Testimony to House Bill 1094

Relating to Discretionary Special Allocation Hunting Licenses

As a wild game chef and someone who works in the outdoor industry here in North Dakota, I hope you will join me in opposing House Bill 1094.

This bill raises significant concerns about the future of our state's hunting culture and the fairness of the special hunting license allocation process. I acknowledge and appreciate the sponsor's motivation to include veteran's organizations in the raffle allocation for special hunting tags, which is undoubtedly a noble cause. However, I urge you to reconsider the broader implications of extending this opportunity to all 501(c) organizations, as outlined in the bill.

If House Bill 1094 is passed, it would allow every type of 501(c) organization - ranging from charitable organizations to business leagues, and even politically affiliated groups - to apply for and potentially win the coveted special hunting licenses. While the inclusion of veteran's organizations is commendable, this legislation opens the door for far-reaching consequences that deserve careful scrutiny.

Consider, for example, the possibility of a business league like the *North Dakota Petroleum Council* or the *Lignite Energy Council* winning one of the prized elk or moose tags instead of your local church groups or wildlife conservation organizations? These energy organizations have significant financial means over a group of high school students hoping to raffle off an elk tag for a church mission trip. Is this the kind of outcome we want for our hunting community - where big business wins out over local groups with more modest resources?

Additionally, this bill would allow 501(c)(4) political advocacy groups to enter the raffle as well. Groups like the *North Dakota Democratic Party*, the *North Dakota Republican Party*, the *Americans for Prosperity*, and *Common Cause North Dakota* would be eligible to win and raffle off one of the hunting tags, potentially using them for political purposes or fundraising. Imagine the backlash from your constituents if one of these politically charged organizations were to win an antelope tag or deer tag? How would you respond to an uproar from your community if one of these political entities applies for and wins one of the special allocation tags?

I urge you to carefully consider the unintended consequences of this bill. While it is crucial to support and honor our veterans and other deserving groups, the current version of House Bill 1094 opens up the raffle system to organizations with vastly different motivations and resources.

Please vote NO on House Bill 1094.

Sincerely,

Jeff Benda
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