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**To:** House Energy and Natural Resources  
**From:** Christopher T. Dodson - Co-Director  
**Subject:** HB 1352 - Possession of a Firearm at a Church  
**Date:** February 7, 2025

The North Dakota Catholic Conference opposes House Bill 1352.

Existing law allows an individual to have a firearm in a place of worship if the individual meets certain requirements and has permission from the church or place of worship. It is a workable law that does not negate the religious organization's fundamental right to define their sacred spaces. House Bill 1352 destroys that carefully designed compromise and tosses aside the religious rights of places of worship.

Essential to religious liberty is the recognition that churches and other places of worship have a fundamental right to create, design, and exercise autonomy of their religious spaces. Government interference with that right would likely not withstand a legal challenge.

Some religious bodies do not have a problem with firearms in places of worship. To others, the very idea is blasphemous. Others fall somewhere in between. The existing law respects the varying religious views on the matter. It allows an individual to possess a firearm at a place of worship if the place of worship gives approval.

Frankly, the only reason for enacting HB 1352 would be to appease individuals who do not have the courtesy to ask for approval or to respect the decision of the place or worship if approval is not given. This is a poor reason for infringing on religious freedom and subjecting the state to litigation.

We urge this committee to give HB 1352 a **Do Not Pass** recommendation.