

**Testimony of Cole Higlin**  
**North Dakota Recreation & Park Association**  
**To House Energy and Natural Resources Committee**  
**In Opposition to HB 1365**  
**Friday, February 7, 2025**

Chairman Porter and members of the Committee, my name is Cole Higlin, and I am the public policy chair of the North Dakota Recreation & Park Association (NDRPA). We represent more than 900 members, primarily park districts, and work to advance parks, recreation and conservation for an enhanced quality of life in North Dakota.

We strongly oppose House Bill 1365. Enacting this bill would lead to significant confusion and enforcement difficulties for local park districts and their staff. Park districts manage a variety of public spaces, many of which are shared with schools and other community organizations. For example, the Rough Rider Center in Watford City and the Williston Area Recreation Center host both high school activities and elementary school programs at different times throughout the day. This bill, as currently written, introduces uncertainty about when weapons are allowed on park district property, particularly in spaces that serve multiple functions.

For instance, a venue might host both a school sports event and a private event, like a wedding or business gathering, on the same day. This overlap could create confusion about whether weapons should be permitted at any given time.

Moreover, this bill would impose an unfair burden on staff—many of whom are students or young adults—who would be tasked with monitoring and enforcing complex, case-by-case decisions about weapon allowances, especially when the distinction between public and private use of the facility is unclear.

In summary, we urge the committee to consider the enforcement challenges, potential confusion, and safety risks that this bill would create. We ask for your support in opposing this legislation and encourage you to explore other solutions that more effectively balance public safety with individual rights.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.