



March 20, 2025
House Political Subdivisions
SB 2269
Donald W. Longmuir, Chair

For the record, my name is Kory Peterson. I am appearing before you today on behalf of the North Dakota League of Cities, in support of SB 2269. Prior to working with the North Dakota League of Cities, I was the Mayor of Horace for 8 years, from June 2016 to July 2024.

The League of Cities is supportive of measures to make a recall within a municipality have more definition. There has been concern about recalls that are based upon an initial petty grievance that escalates into a recall situation.

As Mayor of Horace, I was around to witness 2 recalls which involved 3 elected officials within the city in a two-and-a-half-year period. Both recalls were based upon a perceived grievance by a 5-member group in the city. The grievance was regarding tax increases within the city which were caused by market forces caused by the rapid growth the city was experiencing.

As Mayor, I was initially under the impression for an elected official to be recalled involved in some egregious situation that would be like some criminal activity, policy deviation, or reckless endangerment with the city. I was surprised to learn that the reason can be subjective by a 5-member group of a recall committee. A simple "We feel this council member does not reflect the current sentiment of our city" will suffice as a reason to initiate a recall.

While the League promotes transparency in city governance, there should be processes in the place to make the recall process more aligned with a serious offense or some infraction that was committed by an elected official.

The League wants to encourage citizens to engage in local governance. If recalls are going to be used as a weapon to remove elected officials, it is going to be more difficult to recruit interested citizens to run for public office.

In collaboration with the bill sponsor and the Secretary of State's office, we were able to work out an amendment to this bill to add more clarification and add school districts to this bill. The League appreciates the group effort with the different entities to make this a better bill.

The League recommends a Do Pass on bill 2269.

Thank you.

Kory Peterson