

Dear Chair Luick and Committee Members:

My name is Kathleen Donahue, and I live in District 32 of Bismarck. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of House Bill 1334.

The Steckler children and their parents make a persuasive case for rhubarb as our state vegetable. Given your passion for feeding our nation, I hope you will support their effort.

It's impressive to me to see children engaged in the legislative process. This initiative by the Steckler family demonstrates careful research by the children, who began this journey as part of their coursework to study North Dakota state history. As you have learned, the children's discovery that North Dakota did not have a designated state vegetable led to this initiative.

Who says you can't learn from the younger generation? It was the Steckler children who taught me that rhubarb is a vegetable and not a fruit. Rhubarb is as resilient as our state's settlers and first Americans. Perhaps this comparison is more from a hazard mitigation planner perspective, but I notice rhubarb survives drought and extreme cold temperatures to come back each year.

Until I moved to North Dakota, I never had a rhubarb dish; it quickly became a favorite ingredient for me when cooking my favorite desserts, rhubarb delight and rhubarb cake. I am looking forward this spring to making a roasted rhubarb salad. No wonder this versatile vegetable is a staple across our state and a favorite at family meals and at diners.

The Steckler family's work with Representative Matthew Heilman to make this bill a reality speaks volumes to their dedication and interest in learning about our state's legislative processes. Their unflagging commitment to seeing a bill become law underscores the importance of teaching children their civic responsibilities. Their passion is inspirational. The Steckler children are on their way to being engaged, outstanding citizens, and I hope you will reward them by making rhubarb our state vegetable.

Respectfully submitted,

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