

Chairman Luick, Members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

Good Morning. For the record my name is August Heupel. I am a rancher from Medina, North Dakota and currently serve as the Vice President of I-BAND.

I am testifying this morning in support of SB 2202 and I would like to encourage a DO PASS recommendation from this committee.

I would like to touch on a few reasons why I feel this bill is important. SB 2202 will give every producer paying the checkoff a vote and a voice on who they feel can best represent them on the Beef Commission. Whether a producer is affiliated with an organization or not, they will have an equal and fair shot to run for the beef commission seat in their district if they so choose, and it will give producers the right to vote on who they feel their best representation is. This method is fair, transparent and quite honestly its AMERICAN. How can we as American citizens and producers argue against an election process? I understand and take my role in the organization I represent seriously, having been voted in to represent cattle producers from my district, just as I know all of you take your jobs seriously representing your respective districts and constituents.

Now some opposition to this bill may argue that nothing is wrong with the process now. Which is a governor appointed process. They may also state that the Beef Commission operates well under the current law. There is no problem now, let's not fix what is not broken. To these statements I would say, with all due respect to the current process, producers know producers best, allow us the opportunity to vote on our representation. This bill will allow us to settle this issue amongst ourselves out in the country. The North Dakota Beef Commission is not broken. The process by which you get to serve on the Beef Commission is broken. I stand here today to say yes, there is a problem, but this bill is a solution to the problem.

This bill is about the producer. That's it. It's not about the cattle policy groups we represent. I truly believe that every cattle producer in this room today, whether we agree or not, is doing what he or she feels is best for our industry and I respect them.

Change is good. This bill is about the future, the future of our way of life and hopefully were lucking enough to pass this way of life on to our children and

grandchildren. Let's let every producer be heard with their vote. Thank you and I stand for questions.