



NDSBA
**NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL
BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

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HB 1144

Testimony of Amy De Kok Senate Education Committee March 24, 2025

Chairman Beard and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Amy De Kok, and I am the Executive Director for the North Dakota School Boards Association (NDSBA). NDSBA represents all 168 public school districts and their governing boards. I am here in opposition to HB 1144, specifically the provision that prohibits a restroom for males and a restroom for females from being located together with a communal sink or communal area where students enter and exit individual stalls or rooms.

Across North Dakota, many schools—particularly elementary schools—utilize restroom designs that feature communal handwashing areas outside of individual stalls or rooms separated by gender. This design is not only common but also serves important functional, financial, and safety purposes.

Financial Burden on Schools

Reconfiguring and reconstructing these restroom facilities to comply with HB 1144 would impose an extreme financial burden on school districts. The cost of compliance would be in the hundreds of millions of dollars, as it would require significant structural modifications, including:

- Demolishing and reconstructing existing restroom facilities.
- Expanding floor plans to accommodate separate enclosed restrooms for both genders.
- Addressing plumbing and ventilation issues resulting from such renovations.

For many districts, particularly rural schools, these costs would be prohibitive and could divert critical funding away from educational resources, teacher salaries, and student programming.

Safety and Supervision Concerns

The current design of communal sink areas allows for better supervision by school staff, ensuring student safety and discouraging misconduct. By requiring fully enclosed and separate restrooms, this bill could inadvertently reduce oversight and increase opportunities for bullying or other inappropriate behavior in unsupervised spaces.

Lack of Justification for Structural Overhaul

There has been no demonstrated necessity to eliminate communal sink areas in schools. These designs have been successfully implemented for decades, providing efficient and sanitary restroom facilities for students. The proposed change would create logistical and financial challenges without clear benefits.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose HB 1144 and its restroom design mandate. Schools across North Dakota should not be forced to allocate enormous resources toward unnecessary construction projects when those funds could be better used to support students and educators.

Thank you for your time and consideration.