

**Testimony on HB 1255**  
**Senate State and Local Government Committee**  
**Steve Andrist, Bismarck, ND**  
**March 7, 2025**

Chair Roers and members of the committee:

In an era when misinformation and disinformation are abundant, it is not only appropriate but important for the state to continue its longstanding support of public broadcasting.

Prairie Public Broadcasting provides non-commercial education, enlightenment and entertainment to North Dakotans in every corner of the state, from classical music to children's education to non-partisan news and information. Beginning as far back as the 70s it was my mother's go-to source of daily inspiration, and continues to be important to many family members today. It was so important to my father that through the 90s and 2000s, as a member of the State Senate, he worked each session to advocate for state funding for Prairie Public, always successfully.

Today it is more important than ever for the state to fund this type of service. So many commercial broadcasters provide primarily partisan programming that advocates for a point of view. Information on social media and digital platforms lacks sourcing and can't be trusted to be truthful or factual. But nonprofit journalism such as that provided by Prairie Public and other organizations provide news and information that is multi-sourced, edited and fact-checked, and as such makes a vital contribution to maintaining an informed and engaged citizenry. It could easily be argued that the state has a strong vested interest in supporting such trusted information from other nonprofits as well as Prairie Public. Meanwhile, HB 1255 doesn't just eliminate funding for public broadcasting, it makes it illegal for any state official to approve such funding. That is a bridge much too far.

For these reasons and more I urge you to support a Do Not Pass vote on HB 1255.

Thank you for your consideration.