

I am deeply disturbed and saddened by the North Dakota legislature's attempt to eliminate funding for public broadcasting. I first discovered Prairie Public as a small-town elementary school student when it opened a window to the world for me, giving me exposure to music, art, and dance that was not available otherwise. Over the years, I have depended on public broadcasting to help me understand other cultures and points of view; to give me factual, in-depth news; to entertain me with drama and comedy programs of the highest professional standards; and to open my eyes to historical events that were glossed over or ignored in my formal education. Prairie Public does not simply inform; it helps us learn to empathize with others in spite of our differences, and it nourishes our souls.

The value I find in Prairie Public goes far beyond dollars and cents, but I believe it to be a wise and strategic investment. I have for decades been a consistent financial contributor to public broadcasting. Not everyone has the ability to do that – but everyone deserves access to the unique treasure it offers.

If the North Dakota legislature truly cares about its people—about enhancing quality of life for its residents, educating its children and ensuring that wide-ranging, factual and well-researched information about the world is available to all—then the relatively small amount of funding Prairie Public receives from our tax dollars should be considered an incredible bargain. I urge you most strongly to vote against callously slamming shut that window on the world. Vote against HB 1255.

Most sincerely,

Lorelee J. Benz

Fargo ND