

Testimony in Opposition to HB 1259

Derek Arndt, President of the Bismarck Youth Football League

Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the committee, my name is Derek Arndt, and I serve as the president of the Bismarck Youth Football League. We are the primary youth football program in Bismarck and the surrounding areas, consisting of 34 teams and approximately 750 players ranging from 3rd to 6th grade. Our league is the only program in the area offering full-contact football for youth prior to junior high.

To accommodate these 34 teams, we require green space—fields for practices and games. In Bismarck, green space is limited and highly competitive. We share field space with soccer, baseball, and other activities, as well as with junior high, high school, and college football programs. Since our players are too young to drive, evening practices are essential. This timing allows parents to transport their children after work and ensures fields are available once school teams finish.

While I personally understand and agree with some of the reasoning behind this bill, I must express my strong opposition due to its severe impact on youth sports. One of the primary concerns raised by opponents of this bill is the loss of the extra hour of daylight during Daylight Saving Time (DST). For the Bismarck Youth Football League—and all other fall outdoor sports—that extra hour is absolutely critical.

Our season runs through the third week of October, when sunset already occurs before 7 p.m. Under this bill, without DST, sunset on October 12 would be around 6 p.m. (CST). This significant loss of daylight would drastically reduce the time available for practices and games—especially in areas without field lights. The impact would be even more severe in eastern North Dakota, where Fargo and Grand Forks leagues would lose even more evening light.

Moreover, losing daylight directly correlates with colder temperatures. By late September, our practice times are already shortened due to fading light. With this bill, the situation would become untenable. Simply put, this bill would cripple our league. If passed, I am genuinely uncertain how our league—and many other youth outdoor sports programs—would be able to continue.

I urge you to consider the unintended consequences this bill would have on youth sports, which play a vital role in promoting physical activity, teamwork, and community engagement. Please vote against this bill to preserve the future of youth fall sports in North Dakota.

Thank you for your time and consideration.