

Thank you, Senate State and Local Government Committee, for the opportunity to give my testimony. My name is Karen Krenz, I am from District 1 in Williston and a mother of three boys. I was a teacher and counselor for 23 years in ND. I am asking that you render a DO PASS for SB 2180.

There have been many times at our school board public meetings that we have been silenced for talking about topic that have not been on the agenda. It is vitally important that public has the opportunity to make public comment at a meeting that is of public entity. Public participation ensures transparency and accountability in decision-making processes. It allows community members to voice their concerns, provide input, and influence decisions that affect their lives. Engaging the public fosters trust and collaboration between the community and the governing bodies. As taxpayers, we should have the opportunity to contribute our input during public meetings. When public input is limited, decisions may not fully reflect the needs and priorities of the community, leading to policies that are out of touch with public sentiment. This can result in a lack of trust and increased frustration among community members, as they feel their voices are not being heard. Ultimately, the absence of diverse perspectives and feedback can hinder effective governance and lead to misguided initiatives.

Although they state that the public can submit topics to be included on the agenda, the multiple times I submitted topics, I was rejected. It left me feeling frustrated, as if my voice and concerns were not valued or heard. Despite the opportunity for public comment, it seemed like a mere formality rather than a genuine opportunity for engagement.

Thank you for your consideration on this important issue and for your service to the state of North Dakota.

Karen Krenz