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**SENATE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE**  
**SENATOR KRISTIN ROERS, CHAIRMAN**

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED BY**

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**MICHAEL HOWE, SECRETARY OF STATE**

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Chairman Roers and members of the committee, I'm Michael Howe, North Dakota Secretary of State. I'm here to provide supporting testimony for SB 2230. This bill seeks to have the Secretary of State create and distribute information to voters by mail related to statewide ballot measures and the impacts of their yes or no vote.

SB 2230 would have our office send information regarding any statewide ballot measures to eligible voters prior to statewide elections that include ballot measures. Our office currently provides the ballot title, official ballot summary and fiscal impact for statewide measures on our website, however this would expand that information to include where the measure originated from – legislative action, initiated, or referred measure – as well as an objective analysis of what a vote in favor or opposition means. Most states provide information on ballot measures to their voters. About half of the states do this through online sources with varied information provided, the other half practice what this bill requires in mailing a “voter guide” to either households or individual voters.

Our office often receives calls during the election season from members of the public wanting more detail about specific ballot measures. We often point them to our website for the full ballot initiative text.

The bill sponsor consulted with our agency and we have offered her proposed amendments to ensure we have the resources needed, and that the bill is inclusive of the individuals the sponsor intended.

These amendments include:

- Page 1, line 12: Replacement of “~~secured active~~” with “active voter.” Secured active is a status used to protect the records of law enforcement, judges, etc., so the original language excluded all other qualified voters which was not the intent of the sponsor. Active voter would include those who voted in a statewide election in the last 4 years, and those who have received and maintained a North Dakota driver's or North Dakota non-driver's ID, are United States citizens, and are 18 years of age by the date of the election.

- Page 1, line 23: Replacement of “~~\$250,000~~” with “\$600,000.” If we had a single ballot measure on both the primary and general ballot, we believe this is a minimum of what we would need to provide distribution of information on a measure or two to roughly 450,000 active voters in North Dakota.
  - *Estimated Numbers X 2 elections* - This number is based on 2 elections in a biennial cycle and would not include any statewide special elections.  
Active Voters – 450,000 (we have 594,140 eligible, but not all are considered “active voter” as described above)  
Postage – \$400,000 (bulk rates range from .38 - .50 per piece)  
Printing - \$200,000 (envelopes/mailer)

Chairman Roers and members of the committee that concludes my testimony and I’ll stand for any questions.