



February 13, 2025
Senate State and Local Government
SB 2269
Senator Kristin Roers, Chair

For the record, my name is Kory Peterson. I am appearing before you today on behalf of the North Dakota League of Cities, in support of SB 2269. Prior to working with the North Dakota League of Cities, I was the Mayor of Horace for 8 years, from June 2016 to July 2024.

The League of Cities is supportive of measures to make a recall within a municipality have more definition. There has been concern about recalls that are based upon an initial petty grievance that escalates into a recall situation.

As Mayor of Horace, I was around to witness 2 recalls which involved 3 elected officials within the city in a two-and-a-half-year period. Both recalls were based upon a perceived grievance by a 5-member group in the city. The grievance was regarding tax increases within the city which were caused by market forces caused by the rapid growth the city was experiencing.

As Mayor, I was under the impression for an elected official to be recalled involved in some egregious situation that would be criminal activity, policy deviation, or reckless endangerment with the city. I was surprised to learn that the reason can be subjective by a 5-member group of a recall committee. A simple "We feel this council member does not reflect the current sentiment of our city" will suffice as a reason to initiate a recall.

While the League promotes transparency in city governance, there should be processes in the place to make the recall process more aligned with a serious offense or some infraction that was committed by an elected official.

The League wants to encourage citizens to engage in local governance. If recalls are going to be used as a weapon to remove elected officials, it is going to be more difficult to recruit interested citizens to run for public office.

This bill addresses some of the concerns I heard surrounding Horace city recalls. One issue we see in the bill is the 15 signature to initiate a recall. There are currently 26 cities in the state that have 15 people or less. We would recommend that cities with 250 or more in population be required to have 15 signatures. We want to make the process fair for our smaller communities.

The League is in favor of bill 2269 with considerations to our smaller communities as mentioned above

Thank you.

Kory Peterson