

2019 HOUSE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

HB 1375

2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

Fort Union Room, State Capitol

HB 1375

2/1/2019

32016

☐ Subcommittee

☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature Carmen Hart

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

Relating to references to party affiliation in elections; relating to party affiliation in petitions of candidates for city elective offices

Minutes:

Attachments 1-9

Chairman Kasper opened the hearing on HB 1375.

Rep. Scott Louser appeared in support of HB 1375. This bill removes the prohibition on declaring a party in local elections and requires that declaration. He told a couple of stories that led him here. A group was formed that was known as Make Minot and petitioned the city of Minot to reduce the size of their government and eliminate the wards. That petition passed, and the Minot city council is now 6 at large members with a voting mayor instead of 14. As petitioning, we heard that they won't find enough people to run for office. A second comment made was everybody will be from the same neighborhood. The third one was everyone is going to be from the same employer. There is going to be an employer or two that is going to stack the council. The fourth comment was only the wealthy will be able to run, because it was a citywide campaign and it is expensive. The fifth one was members of the good old boys' club are going to win the election. The overall results were just the opposite of the points commented on. (4:40-5:30) If I had to characterize the party affiliation of the Make Minot group, I would say there is one democrat, one moderate republican, two conservative republicans, one libertarian, and one independent. Then he discussed other reasons that might be given to oppose this bill. (5:59-11:53) It is my feeling we should have party declaration at the local level because of transparency, and these entities that are elected locally have the power to tax our property and, in some cases, our purchases. I think the parties would find this as a tool to build their party. I think emerging parties would agree as well. This would be an opportunity to build an emerging party in our state. An amendment was handed out regarding a federal employee candidate. Attachment 1. (End 14:00)

Rep. Laning: Having been a small town mayor, do you think declaring a party would give an expectation that a political candidate would be subscribing to the party platform?

Rep. Louser: Yes, some would probably expect that.

Rep. B. Koppelman: Would party affiliation help inform what you believe the philosophy of that person is if you don't get to ask them as opposed to being a name recognition or popularity contest?

Rep. Louser: For some voters, this may help.

Rep. Schauer: I think the pushback is going to be in some of your smaller communities. What are your feelings on that?

Rep. Louser: I sense that in small communities everybody knows the candidate personally, so why declare a party. I think we are at a point where people are open with their politics, and we may hear that as a reason to not pass this bill. To me, that is a reason to pass it.

Rep. Schauer: You are a conservative and stand for limited government. Yet, at the same time, you want a bill passed that would say the state mandates this. Do you struggle with that?

Rep. Louser: I don't think that any one party has a platform that there should be no government involvement especially in politics. I don't struggle with this at all.

Rep. Hoverson: Would you be open to an amendment that would say other?

Rep. Louser: There wouldn't be an option on the ballot to pick something. It would be printed next to your name.

Rep. Hoverson: When you run for office, would you have to pick one ahead of time, or can you provide that word yourself?

Rep. Louser: You would provide the word as the party descriptor when your name goes on the ballot. The suggestion in the bill was if you didn't want to choose what is an established party, you would claim independent as a status. I am open to the changes if the committee sees fit.

Rep. Laning: Do you see this as a mandate, not an option, for an individual running for local office?

Rep. Louser: Yes.

Chairman Kasper: The republican party in Fargo has a united republican party committee of all the districts in the city of Fargo and Cass county. This past election the board of the URC decided to endorse the local candidates. The process was they were asked if they wished to complete a survey and to let the URC know if they wanted to be endorsed by the URC.

Rep. Louser: This isn't a process that would require endorsements. This is simply a declaration on the ballot.

Rep. C. Johnson: I am guessing on a local level you are going to see a majority of people check that independent box.

Rep. Louser: If you are referring to your membership in the party as a dues-paying member, that is probably accurate. Somebody could be part of a party and not pay their dues, because that is how they are claiming.

Rep. Mike Nathe appeared in support. To me, this bill is for transparency and openness. We set tax policy, collect tax money, and spend tax money, no different than the political subs. Why are they exempt from the transparency and openness? The bill doesn't force you to pick r or d. You can vote independent.

Rep. Karls: We all know of people that we think are one party or another, and then totally vote with the other party. Would declaring a party really help if they portray themselves as one party?

Rep. Nathe: To me, it is just about being up front in who they are.

Rep. Rohr: Do you think this will drive up the cost for the candidates if they declared their party?

Rep. Nathe: No, I don't think so.

Rep. Laning: How would this help or hinder a park board election?

Rep. Nathe: It gives the public some more information about who that candidate is.

Rep. Vetter: Do you feel there are any offices that should be non-partisan like sheriff?

Rep. Nathe: I leave that to the bill sponsor.

Opposition

Linda Svihovec, Research Analyst with the North Dakota Association of Counties, appeared in opposition. She suggested it change the wording to no party. Attachment 2. (31:03-35:50)

Rep. Hoverson: Is it really possible to be politically neutral if in a political position?

Linda Svihovec: Yes, I am an example. It was only until about the last five years I thought I might want to identify with a party.

Rep. Vetter: You knew what party your peers were, so why shouldn't the general public know what party you belong to?

Linda Svihovec: I had a pretty good idea what party the commissioners were, but across 53 counties, I probably could tell you what three or four were for sheriff, recorder, treasurer, and an auditor.

Rep. B. Koppelman: I thought you were saying the non-partisan nature of local races allow that to happen which would insinuate that the partisan nature of our election doesn't allow that to happen. Do you believe that they are not the same?

Linda Svihovec: When you are talking about your urban legislative districts, yes they are your neighborhoods. Many of the rural districts are so large that you didn't know your legislators.

Rep. B. Koppelman: I served on a local school board, and it was obvious what political philosophy people had on the board. Do you think our secretary of state has had an inability to handle elections because of his partisan office?

Linda Svihovec: Personally, I think there are some state elected offices right now that don't make sense they are party affiliated as well. From the association of counties perspective, I am not aware that anyone in the counties feels that the secretary of state has not performed his job because he is a republican.

Chairman Kasper: Are you suggesting that a person's decision making process, values, and personality would change if they had to put an r, d, or I behind their name?

Linda Svihovec: I would say the opportunity would be there for that. They might have some flexibility if they weren't party affiliated.

Chairman Kasper: I know Rep. Anderson who you mentioned in your testimony, and I don't think there is anybody in your area that didn't know that he was a very ultra conservative republican. Did that handle change his demeanor or decision making process from your observation when he served in the other capacity? Don't answer that. I just made an observation.

Doug Schonert, former Burleigh County Commissioner, appeared in opposition.
Attachment 3. (46:26-50:26)

Shannon Straight, Alderman, City Council, City of Minot, appeared in opposition.
Attachment 4. (50:50-56:46)

Rep. Schauer: Could you go down the council seats and know whether they are conservative or liberal?

Mr. Straight: I don't really know.

Rep. Schauer: Why do you think it would impact what you are doing locally?

Mr. Straight: It adds a layer of complication that I don't think is necessary. I wanted to serve my community. I have no desire to aspire to anything larger in politics. That passion speaks more than a designation.

Rep. B. Koppelman: Do you believe there is much difference in a lower case I independent versus no party?

Mr. Straight: In most cases people want to elect someone on a local level that wants to serve, and it doesn't really matter what the party affiliation is.

Rep. Hoverson: How would the voter find out how you think?

Mr. Straight: Throughout the Make Minot campaign we were very tactful in not criticizing decisions that have been made in the past. I think you can ask us. We are personable people.

Rep. P. Anderson: If you put a motion in front of your group at the next meeting that you had to declare on the ballot for the next commission and mayor race, would that pass?

Mr. Straight: I think it would fail.

Rep. P. Anderson: This is the state mandating to local. How do you feel about putting in this bill that every political sub could decide on your own?

Mr. Straight: One-size model doesn't work.

Rep. Vetter: Don't you think running as an independent would give you an advantage?

Mr. Straight: From the city's representation on the ballot, I think a blank slate is much better.

Rep. Vetter: Sometimes you clearly know. With this, you could say I am non-partisan.

Mr. Straight: For me it becomes a slippery slope. I can put anything I want on if I want to run for city council. Maybe some people want to embrace what party you represent. I think many people don't. Many people just want to serve their community, put in a short period of time and next woman up, man up philosophy.

Josh Wolsky District 5 constituent and current Minot alderman, appeared in opposition. We were trying to solve citizen engagement with the Make Minot campaign. We identified the form of government in our council and ward system as being one of the barriers to that engagement. At the local level we make these decisions on an individual basis, and we do not follow them on party lines traditionally. Local government is not a party-building foundation. In Minot our challenge was engagement, and engagement comes from people being informed and being involved in their government. It doesn't come from assuming a particular idea about a person because of a particular label they wear.

Chairman Kasper: Would putting a label beside your name change how you would make decisions as a member of the Minot city council?

Mr. Wolsky: No. I am not completely sure what the parties represent any more. We listen to what our citizens have to say. We look at the challenges we have to face and make decisions on what we think is the best course.

Chairman Kasper: Would not the candidate identified with a party or no party philosophy help your voters become a little bit more knowledgeable about where you might be politically in decision making process if you were elected?

Mr. Wolsky: Possibly. Our community has become more engaged and informed. It has nothing to do with parties.

Rep. Schneider: Would putting a party affiliation on your local ballot impair your ability to engage and to get consensus and carry through on projects and goals with folks in Minot and how that might happen?

Mr. Wolsky: Yes. I think wearing that label right now would be a detriment to the work we do.

Chairman Kasper: Would not the safe harbor of no party or independent give you the opportunity to not get involved with being labeled?

Mr. Wolsky: It certainly is an option that I think would be embraced by many local candidates, but I don't know what mandating it serves the process.

Rep. Schauer: If you had the party affiliation and you had the success, wouldn't that be inspirational to what is happening today?

Mr. Wolsky: Perhaps, but the success of the Minot story is a result of citizens engaging. It happened naturally.

Rep. B. Koppelman: What would you say to an individual who wanted to run for a Minot local office and want to run as a fill in the blank party? Would you ask them what value would that have?

Mr. Wolsky: Absolutely not.

Rep. B. Koppelman: What is wrong with that being we are not forcing anybody to claim a party, because they have the option of independent or possibly no party?

Mr. Wolsky: I think government is here to do the work of the people and for the citizens that are most engaged and willing to seek out information about their candidates. I don't have a problem with those citizens being able to make important decisions in the voting booth.

Rep. B. Koppelman: Making it hard on all levels would be better?

Mr. Wolsky: No. I think we are talking about two separate issues. The physical act of voting is not the same as being an informed voter.

Jim Neubauer, City Administrator for Mandan, appeared for Commissioner Davis in opposition. Attachment 5 was written testimony from Commissioner Davis and Commissioner Larson. January 22, Mandan City Commission took a position in opposition for all of the reasons previously stated.

Debbie Kroshus, Burleigh County Recorder, appeared in opposition. Attachment 6 included her testimony as well other county recorders. (1:32-1:37)

Dana Schaar Jahner, North Dakota Recreation and Park Association, appeared in opposition. Attachment 7. (1:37-1:39)

Kevin Vein, City Council Member, City of Grand Forks, appeared in opposition. Attachment 8. (1:40-1:43)

Rep. Vetter: Were all the members of the city council present for that vote?

Mr. Vein: There was one absent. There are 7 members. It was 5-1. The person that voted against was primarily a procedural.

Jerry Obenauer, Hazen Mayor, appeared in opposition.

Blake Crosby, Executive Director of the North Dakota League of Cities, appeared in opposition. Attachment 9 included written testimony from other city officials throughout the state. (1:46-1:54)

Rep. Louser: I take exception to your suggestion that this was out of state. I have not been contacted by anybody from out of state.

Mr. Crosby: This is discussion that has been had among a number of league directors from around the US. I will not identify the entity.

Rep. Louser: If it was an out of state interest group, would they be familiar with the ___ Act and exempt federal employees. That wasn't in my original bill.

Mr. Crosby: I publicly apologize if I offended you. I did not mean to do so and retract that statement.

Rep. Vetter: If we can run a partisan campaign and work together here, why can't they?

Mr. Crosby: It is because of the policies they are dealing with. They are very much held to be locally accountable.

Rep. Schauer: If I put an I or NP on my name, is that partisan?

Mr. Crosby: Yes, because you have designated you have a certain philosophical base.

Chairman Kasper: Which informs the electorate?

Mr. Crosby: It does inform the electorate, but the small cities are saying things are fine the way they are.

Chairman Kasper: I can assure you there is a whole lot of people in this legislature who forget about the political philosophy of the party once they get here, and they work on their philosophy that they believe is the correct philosophy.

Mr. Crosby: I see that. I asked myself that question as I saw these testimonies came in. The answer I came up with is we are all guilty by association from the federal level.

Chairman Kasper closed the hearing.

2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Government and Veterans Affairs Committee Fort Union Room, State Capitol

HB 1375
2/15/2019
32854

- ☐ Subcommittee
☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk: Carmen Hart

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

Relating to references to party affiliation in elections; relating to party affiliation in petitions of candidates for city elective offices

Minutes:

Attachments 1-2

Chairman Kasper opened the meeting on HB 1375.

Rep. Louser presented Attachments 1 and 2. (:45-3:15)

Rep. Schneider: The testimony was universally negative. Neither one of these amendments can change that negativity. I would hate to waste a lot of our time on amendments that are still going to allow the bill to have its negative attributes.

Rep. Laning: I think this is going to make a mess out of small town elections. I am opposed to this bill entirely.

Rep. P. Anderson: I am going to oppose. We are all about local control, but all of a sudden we are not about local control.

Rep. B. Koppelman: I didn't hear from a lot of citizens opposed to this idea. It was all elected officials who seemed to be worried about what their reelection prospects were going to be if they had to identify what party they were from.

Rep. Louser moved amendment 2002.

Rep. Vetter seconded the motion.

Voice vote. Motion carries.

Rep. Louser moved amendment 2003.

Rep. B. Koppelman seconded the motion.

Voice vote. Motion carries.

Rep. Louser made a motion for a DO PASS AS AMENDED.

Rep. B. Koppelman seconded the motion.

Rep. P. Anderson: I just looked at all the cities, large and small, that said don't do this. I am going to vote no on this.

Rep. Schneider: In reviewing those that were against it, and they weren't people up for reelection, and at my two town halls, they were not people that were up for reelection. It is mean spirited and partisan.

Rep. Louser: 2001 amendment needs to be added if we didn't action.

Chairman Kasper: We need to consider 2001 which allows the ___ employees not to declare a party affiliation.

Rep. Louser and Koppelman withdrew their previous motion.

Rep. Louser: I move the 2001 amendment.

Rep. B. Koppelman seconded the motion.

Voice vote. Motion carries.

Rep. Schauer: I would disagree the fact that it was called a bad bill. It is not mean spirited. However, there isn't any appetite that I have seen for this bill. I think it will come across as big bad Bismarck telling the locals what to do, so I will oppose the bill.

Rep. Louser made a motion for a DO PASS AS AMENDED.

Rep. B. Koppelman seconded the motion. I appreciate the amendments do include no party.

A roll call vote was taken. 4-10, 0 absent. Motion fails.

Rep. Laning made a motion for a DO NOT PASS AS AMENDED.

Rep. P. Anderson seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. 10-4, 0 absent.

Rep. P. Anderson will carry the bill.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1375

Page 1, line 2, after the first comma insert "40-21-06,"

Page 1, line 3, remove "; and to repeal section 40-21-06 of the North Dakota Century Code,"

Page 1, line 4, remove "relating to references to party affiliation in petitions of candidates for city elective offices"

Page 1, line 12, overstrike "or"

Page 1, line 13, after "instruction" insert ", or an elective county office other than county commissioner, state's attorney, and sheriff"

Page 2, line 24, overstrike "mentioned" and insert immediately thereafter "identified as no-party candidates"

Page 2, line 24, after "law" insert "as a no-party office"

Page 3, after line 29, insert:

"SECTION 5. AMENDMENT. Section 40-21-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

40-21-06. Reference to party ballot or affiliation in petition of candidate for municipal office prohibited.

No reference may be made to a party ballot nor to the party affiliation of a candidate in a petition to be filed by or in behalf of a candidate for nomination to a public office in any incorporated city in this state, except as required by section 40-21-07."

Page 4, line 18, after "candidates" insert "for city council member, city commissioner, mayor, or park board member"

Page 4, line 20, replace "independent" with "no party"

Page 5, line 7, after "individual" insert "for an office for which a party designation or no-party designation is required under section 40-21-07"

Page 5, line 9, replace "word "independent" with "phrase "no party"

Page 5, remove line 15

Renumber accordingly

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1375

Page 1, line 1, after "sections" insert "15.1-09-08, 15.1-09-11,"

Page 1, line 2, after the first comma insert "40-21-06,"

Page 1, line 3, remove "; and to repeal section 40-21-06 of the North Dakota Century Code,"

Page 1, line 4, remove "relating to references to party affiliation in petitions of candidates for city elective offices"

Page 1, after line 5, insert:

"SECTION 1. AMENDMENT. Section 15.1-09-08 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

15.1-09-08. School district elections - Candidate filings.

An individual seeking election to the board of a school district shall prepare and sign a document stating the individual's name and the position for which that individual is a candidate; and the party designated by the individual as being the party to which the individual belongs, or, if the individual chooses, identifying the individual as "no party". A candidate shall also file a statement of interests as required by section 16.1-09-02. Whether or not the election is held in conjunction with a statewide election, these documents must be filed with the school district business manager, or mailed to and in the possession of the business manager, by four p.m. of the sixty-fourth day before the election.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENT. Section 15.1-09-11 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

15.1-09-11. School district elections - Preparation of ballots.

1. At least forty days before the election, the business manager shall prepare and cause to be printed, or otherwise uniformly reproduced, an official ballot containing the names of all individuals who have indicated their intent to be candidates by meeting the provisions of section 15.1-09-08. Next to or underneath each candidate's name, the ballot must include the name of the designated party or "no party" as selected by the candidate under section 15.1-09-08. The business manager shall notify the candidates as to the time and place of the drawing for position on the ballot.
2. The ballot must be ~~nonpartisan in form~~ and include:
 - a. The words "official ballot" at the top;
 - b. The name of the school district;
 - c. The date of the election;
 - d. The number of persons to be elected to each office; and

- e. Below the list of candidates for each office, blank spaces in which names not printed on the ballot may be written."

Page 1, line 12, overstrike "or"

Page 1, line 13, after "instruction" insert ", or an elective county office other than county commissioner, state's attorney, and sheriff"

Page 2, line 24, overstrike "mentioned" and insert immediately thereafter "identified as no-party candidates"

Page 2, line 24, after "law" insert "as a no-party office"

Page 3, after line 29, insert:

"SECTION 7. AMENDMENT. Section 40-21-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

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Page 4, line 18, after "candidates" insert "for city council member, city commissioner, mayor, or park board member"

Page 4, line 20, replace "independent" with "no party"

Page 5, line 7, after "individual" insert "for an office for which a party designation or no-party designation is required under section 40-21-07"

Page 5, line 9, replace "word 'independent'" with "phrase 'no party'"

Page 5, remove line 15

Renumber accordingly

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1375

Page 4, line 20, after ""independent"" insert ". However, a candidate who is a federal government employee does not need to designate a party affiliation"

Page 5, line 9, after ""independent"" insert ". However, a candidate who is a federal government employee does not need to designate a party affiliation"

Renumber accordingly

February 15, 2019

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 - c. The date of the election;
 - d. The number of persons to be elected to each office; and

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- e. Below the list of candidates for each office, blank spaces in which names not printed on the ballot may be written."

Page 1, line 12, overstrike "or"

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Page 4, line 18, after "candidates" insert "for city council member, city commissioner, mayor, or park board member"

Page 4, line 20, replace "independent" with "no party"

Page 4, line 20, after the second underscored quotation mark insert ". However, a candidate who is a federal government employee does not need to designate a party affiliation"

Page 5, line 7, after "individual" insert "for an office for which a party designation or no-party designation is required under section 40-21-07"

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Page 5, remove line 15

Renumber accordingly

Date: 2-15-19
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1375

House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

☐ Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: 19-0069.02002

Recommendation: ☒ Adopt Amendment
☐ Do Pass ☐ Do Not Pass ☐ Without Committee Recommendation
☐ As Amended ☐ Rerefer to Appropriations
☐ Place on Consent Calendar
Other Actions: ☐ Reconsider ☐

Motion Made By Rep. Louser Seconded By Rep. Vetter

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Jim Kasper			Rep. Pamela Anderson		
Vice Chair Vicky Steiner			Rep. Mary Schneider		
Rep. Jeff Hoverson					
Rep. Craig Johnson					
Rep. Daniel Johnston					
Rep. Karen Karls					
Rep. Ben Koppelman					
Rep. Vernon Laning					
Rep. Scott Louser					
Rep. Karen Rohr					
Rep. Austen Schauer					
Rep. Steve Vetter					

Total (Yes) _____ No _____

Absent _____

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Date: 2-15-19
Roll Call Vote #: 2

**2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1375**

House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

☐ Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: 19. 0069.02 00 3

Recommendation: ☒ Adopt Amendment
☐ Do Pass ☐ Do Not Pass ☐ Without Committee Recommendation
☐ As Amended ☐ Rerefer to Appropriations
☐ Place on Consent Calendar
Other Actions: ☐ Reconsider ☐

Motion Made By Rep. Louser Seconded By Rep. B. Koppelman

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
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Rep. Karen Karls					
Rep. Ben Koppelman					
Rep. Vernon Laning					
Rep. Scott Louser					
Rep. Karen Rohr					
Rep. Austen Schauer					
Rep. Steve Vetter					

Total (Yes) _____ No _____

Absent _____

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Date: 2-15-19
Roll Call Vote #: 3

2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1375

House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

☐ Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: _____

Recommendation: ☐ Adopt Amendment
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☐ Place on Consent Calendar
Other Actions: ☐ Reconsider ☐ _____

Motion Made By Rep. Louser Seconded By Rep. B. Koppelman

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
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Rep. Karen Karls					
Rep. Ben Koppelman					
Rep. Vernon Laning					
Rep. Scott Louser					
Rep. Karen Rohr					
Rep. Austen Schauer					
Rep. Steve Vetter					

Withdrawn motions

Total (Yes) _____ No _____

Absent _____

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Date: 2-15-19
Roll Call Vote #: 34

2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1375

House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

☐ Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: 19.0069.02001

Recommendation: ☒ Adopt Amendment
☐ Do Pass ☐ Do Not Pass ☐ Without Committee Recommendation
☐ As Amended ☐ Rerefer to Appropriations
☐ Place on Consent Calendar
Other Actions: ☐ Reconsider ☐ _____

Motion Made By Rep. Louser Seconded By Rep. B. Koppelman

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Jim Kasper			Rep. Pamela Anderson		
Vice Chair Vicky Steiner			Rep. Mary Schneider		
Rep. Jeff Hoverson					
Rep. Craig Johnson					
Rep. Daniel Johnston					
Rep. Karen Karls					
Rep. Ben Koppelman					
Rep. Vernon Laning					
Rep. Scott Louser					
Rep. Karen Rohr					
Rep. Austen Schauer					
Rep. Steve Vetter					

Vote on Motion Carries

Total (Yes) _____ No _____

Absent _____

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Date: 2-15-19
Roll Call Vote #: 5

**2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1375**

House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

☐ Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: _____

Recommendation: ☐ Adopt Amendment
☒ Do Pass ☐ Do Not Pass ☐ Without Committee Recommendation
☒ As Amended ☐ Rerefer to Appropriations
☐ Place on Consent Calendar

Other Actions: ☐ Reconsider ☐ _____

Motion Made By Rep. Louser Seconded By Rep. B. Koppelman

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Jim Kasper		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rep. Pamela Anderson		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vice Chair Vicky Steiner		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rep. Mary Schneider		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rep. Jeff Hoverson		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Rep. Craig Johnson		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Rep. Daniel Johnston	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Rep. Karen Karls		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Rep. Ben Koppelman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Rep. Vernon Laning		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Rep. Scott Louser	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Rep. Karen Rohr		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Rep. Austen Schauer		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Rep. Steve Vetter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

Total (Yes) 4 No 10

Absent 0

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Date: 2-15-19
Roll Call Vote #: 6

**2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1375**

House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

☐ Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: _____

Recommendation: ☐ Adopt Amendment
☐ Do Pass ☒ Do Not Pass ☐ Without Committee Recommendation
☒ As Amended ☐ Rerefer to Appropriations
☐ Place on Consent Calendar

Other Actions: ☐ Reconsider ☐ _____

Motion Made By Rep. Laning Seconded By Rep. P. Anderson

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Jim Kasper	X		Rep. Pamela Anderson	X	
Vice Chair Vicky Steiner	X		Rep. Mary Schneider	X	
Rep. Jeff Hoverson	X				
Rep. Craig Johnson	X				
Rep. Daniel Johnston		X			
Rep. Karen Karls	X				
Rep. Ben Koppelman		X			
Rep. Vernon Laning	X				
Rep. Scott Louser		X			
Rep. Karen Rohr	X				
Rep. Austen Schauer	X				
Rep. Steve Vetter		X			

Total (Yes) 10 No 4

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Rep. P. Anderson

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1375: Government and Veterans Affairs Committee (Rep. Kasper, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS** and when so amended, recommends **DO NOT PASS** (10 YEAS, 4 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1375 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 1, line 1, after "sections" insert "15.1-09-08, 15.1-09-11,"

Page 1, line 2, after the first comma insert "40-21-06,"

Page 1, line 3, remove "; and to repeal section 40-21-06 of the North Dakota Century Code,"

Page 1, line 4, remove "relating to references to party affiliation in petitions of candidates for city elective offices"

Page 1, after line 5, insert:

"SECTION 1. AMENDMENT. Section 15.1-09-08 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

15.1-09-08. School district elections - Candidate filings.

An individual seeking election to the board of a school district shall prepare and sign a document stating the individual's name ~~and~~ the position for which that individual is a candidate; and the party designated by the individual as being the party to which the individual belongs, or, if the individual chooses, identifying the individual as "no party". A candidate shall also file a statement of interests as required by section 16.1-09-02. Whether or not the election is held in conjunction with a statewide election, these documents must be filed with the school district business manager, or mailed to and in the possession of the business manager, by four p.m. of the sixty-fourth day before the election.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENT. Section 15.1-09-11 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

15.1-09-11. School district elections - Preparation of ballots.

1. At least forty days before the election, the business manager shall prepare and cause to be printed, or otherwise uniformly reproduced, an official ballot containing the names of all individuals who have indicated their intent to be candidates by meeting the provisions of section 15.1-09-08. Next to or underneath each candidate's name, the ballot must include the name of the designated party or "no party" as selected by the candidate under section 15.1-09-08. The business manager shall notify the candidates as to the time and place of the drawing for position on the ballot.
2. The ballot must ~~be nonpartisan in form and~~ include:
 - a. The words "official ballot" at the top;
 - b. The name of the school district;
 - c. The date of the election;
 - d. The number of persons to be elected to each office; and
 - e. Below the list of candidates for each office, blank spaces in which names not printed on the ballot may be written."

Page 1, line 12, overstrike "or"

Page 1, line 13, after "instruction" insert ", or an elective county office other than county commissioner, state's attorney, and sheriff"

Page 2, line 24, overstrike "mentioned" and insert immediately thereafter "identified as no-party candidates"

Page 2, line 24, after "law" insert "as a no-party office"

Page 3, after line 29, insert:

"SECTION 7. AMENDMENT. Section 40-21-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

40-21-06. Reference to party ballot or affiliation in petition of candidate for municipal office prohibited.

No reference may be made to a party ballot nor to the party affiliation of a candidate in a petition to be filed by or in behalf of a candidate for nomination to a public office in any incorporated city in this state, except as required by section 40-21-07."

Page 4, line 18, after "candidates" insert "for city council member, city commissioner, mayor, or park board member"

Page 4, line 20, replace "independent" with "no party"

Page 4, line 20, after the second underscored quotation mark insert ". However, a candidate who is a federal government employee does not need to designate a party affiliation"

Page 5, line 7, after "individual" insert "for an office for which a party designation or no-party designation is required under section 40-21-07"

Page 5, line 9, replace "word 'independent'" with "phrase 'no party'"

Page 5, line 9, after the second underscored quotation mark insert ". However, a candidate who is a federal employee does not need to designate a party affiliation"

Page 5, remove line 15

Renumber accordingly

2019 TESTIMONY

HB 1375

19.0069.02001
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for
Representative Louser
January 22, 2019

#1
HB 1375

2-1-19

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1375

Page 4, line 20, after ""independent"" insert ". However, a candidate who is a federal government employee does not need to designate a party affiliation"

Page 5, line 9, after ""independent"" insert ". However, a candidate who is a federal government employee does not need to designate a party affiliation"

Renumber accordingly

Testimony Prepared for the
House Government & Veterans Affairs
February 1, 2019
By: Linda Svihovec, NDACo Research Analyst



RE: OPPOSE House Bill 1375 – Party Affiliation for County/City Election Candidates

Good morning Chairman Kasper and committee members. For the record, my name is Linda Svihovec, Research Analyst with the North Dakota Association of Counties. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony opposing HB 1375 which changes how we elect city and county officials in North Dakota. Current law provides that city and county officials are to be elected on a no-party ballot. HB1375 requires candidates for city and county offices to identify a party on the petition, affidavit for nomination, and on the ballot.

Prior to my retirement from McKenzie County in June 2017, I served 22 years as the “no-party” elected county auditor/treasurer. In all of those years, I never once considered that a political party would or should influence the responsibility and duties I had to carry out the century code requirements of my job. This was especially important in my role as the chief election officer for the county. In that role, I felt that it was important to remain politically neutral in all aspects of the election set up and administration process.

For the majority of my auditor/treasurer career, I was fortunate to work with a group of fellow elected officials who understood that collectively our goal was to provide the best service to the citizens of the county, regardless of personal political beliefs. It is critical that county elected officials are objective and without bias in order to provide county services efficiently and cost effectively. The best county commissioners I have worked with held opposing political views, but when they came to the board meeting to address an emergency, a zoning issue, or an investment in a major road project, their party affiliation was irrelevant. Recently, county commissioners across the state have had to deal with enormous issues such as DAPL, flooding, and an oil boom. In times of crisis, politics does not have a place.

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County elected officials serve their county residents who are also their neighbors, in-laws, classmates, parents, children, and fellow church members. These relationships and the commitment to serve their constituents in a responsible manner is what inspires county elected officials to run for office. Politicizing county elected offices may deter future leaders from running for local public office.

Chairman Kasper and committee members, on behalf of our 53 member counties, the ND Association of Counties urges a DO NOT PASS on HB1375, as it will negatively impact grass roots, nonpartisan, county elections and those who run for county office.

HB 1375

Chairman Kasper and Committee Members:

My name is Doug Schonert. I come before you today to speak in opposition of House Bill 1375.

I served as a Burleigh County Commissioner for 24 years. I have been very proud and pleased that the county commission office is a non-partisan elective office.

In nonpartisan elections, each candidate for office is eligible based on her or his own merits rather than as a member of a political party. No political affiliation (if one exists) is shown on the ballot next to a candidate. Generally, the winner is chosen from a runoff election where the candidates are the top two vote-getters from a primary election. In some elections, the candidates might be members of a national party, but do not run as party members for local office.

Citing: Non-partisan democracy From Wikipedia

During my tenure as County Commissioner, I worked with city commissioners from the Cities of Lincoln, Bismarck, Mandan, Regan, Wing, and Wilton and many officers affiliated with the many other counties' townships. During all of my meetings with these individuals, little to no politics was discussed. That is the way it should be.

I believe once a political affiliation (D, R, I) is attached to your name, your constituents would have different expectation of you and your decisions.

It appears that state and federal partisan politics have become more and more out of control and gotten to the point of causing conflict between friends, neighbors, and even family members. This all has a negative effect on our communities and families.

I do not want this to happen on the local levels. Over the years I made many decision, some could be considered very conservative and others very

liberal, but I felt no loyalty to any party and had the freedom to make good choices as the situation or issue may have called for.

I firmly believe in grassroots government. It is defined as service by the common or ordinary people, especially as contrasted with the leadership or elite of a political party, social organization, etc.; the rank and file.

Citing: <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/grassroots>.

Mandating the recording of a reference to a party affiliation in elections of candidates will only cause more and stronger partisanship on the local level. We should be working towards a better understanding of the other person's views and work towards the betterment of our communities.

Before mandating political affiliation upon local elected officials, whether they are county, city, township, school boards, or any other local elected offices, you need to reach out for input from and to ask the citizens if they support this change. I believe that the citizens and the local elected office holders and/or candidates would agree that this is a bad idea. It is critical that all local government remain as grassroots government.

For these reasons, I ask for a No vote on HB 1375.

Douglas Schonert
14600 201 Ave NE
Baldwin, ND 58521
701 223-1610 (Home)
701 220-3279 (Cell)

House Government and Veterans Affairs
Chairman Jim Kasper,
February 1, 2019

#4
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2-1-19

By: Shannon Straight
Alderman, City Council, City of Minot
Shannon.straight@minotnd.org
701.721.5533

HB 1375

Chairman Kasper and Members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee, my name is Shannon Straight. The governing body of the City of Minot is a city council consisting of the mayor and six aldermen. I am one of those six aldermen. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of our entire city council.

This bill would require the city auditor, while preparing the ballot for a city election, to place the name of a designated party, such "Republican," "Democrat-NPL," or other minor party name, designated by the individual, as being the party to which the individual belongs, or if the individual so chooses, the word "independent." We see little purpose in doing this for local elections. While candidates for city council may or may not have a party affiliations, it matters little for local elections.

I have a great deal of respect for Representative Louser and his commitment and determination to serve Minot and our state. I am proud of my friend and of the work we did together with many others on the #MakeMinot campaign. #MakeMinot was the first significant political change in our community in some 50 years. It represents collaboration to perfection because it was absent of political party

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affiliation. It reduced our City Council from 14 to 6 members with a voting Mayor and adds accountability for voters. It speaks to the 'more unites us than divides us mentality' because it was a collective of political stripes from various backgrounds that worked tirelessly to gain the publics trust before gaining overwhelming community support through a public vote.

At the city level, we are very close to our constituents. If we do not know our constituents directly, I would submit we are separated by only one degree. In other words, the voter would least know someone who knows us directly. We want to encourage voters in city elections to get to know us personally. Party affiliation tends to place people in political camps that have little to do with local decision making.

HB 1375 would only further exacerbate political division and the skepticism of government. The success of #MakeMinot was less about R & D, or I and more about WE/US. Let's keep in mind the numerous folks that possibly like you get involved and run for office more out of a desire to represent family, serve their community and try their best to aid our great state. It's not out of representing a label that only defines a small aspect of who one may be or want to be. Our backgrounds, life experiences, and familiarity with city issues are more important at the local level than party affiliation. That's what we want the voter to focus on.

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At the city level, we don't really deal with broad social or economic issues that will have implications state-wide. That's where party affiliation matters---and why it's significant to the voter in legislative and statewide races. Our decisions impact only the citizens of a small political subdivision. We are dealing with budget issues, city staffing, zoning and city management. Party affiliation is simply not relevant to the vast majority of issues that come before a city council

A city council must operate based on regular interactions with other council members. We must deal with each other on a basis of collegiality. Listing party affiliation on the ballot for city elections might introduce a partisan flare into city council meetings that would be unproductive and create unintended quorum gridlock due to the small size of local councils. Our council consists of only seven members. As an alderman, I need to quickly look past labels and deal with each of my colleagues on a more personal level. We are concerned that introducing party affiliation into city politics would foster an environment in which our council breaks into political camps rather than focusing on local issues.

In closing, many folks simply want to do their part and serve for a period of time. There is little reason to encourage the public to see that council is somehow controlled by "Republicans," the "Democrats-NPL," or other minority party. When I ran, I did not seek the help of any political party. At the local level, that is simply unnecessary, and, further unproductive to advance city interests.

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In fact, in the three years I've served Minot not once has someone asked my party affiliation. It doesn't matter because people know my passion for the place. It's my hometown, where I grew up and returned to live & work following the 2011 Flood. If HB 1375 were to pass, "how many like me would never run, nor stand before you now, because either they don't know what party represents them or don't care and would rather not be labeled in order to serve." Passion and commitment to service need to be pre-requisites, not what party you also want to serve. I respectfully encourage a "Do Not Pass" on HB 1375. Thank you for your time and for serving North Dakota and I would be happy to stand for any questions.

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House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee
February 1, 2019
HB 1375

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. For the record I am Scott Davis, and today I am here as a City Commissioner from the City of Mandan, and in opposition of House Bill 1375.

The Mandan City Commission, on January 22nd, took a unanimous position to oppose this bill as we feel there is no place for partisan elections at the local level. Political parties play an important role in all elections, however I feel they are irrelevant to providing many of the services we provide. There is an old saying for this, and I'm not sure who the author is, but it goes like this, "There is no Democratic, Republican or Independent way to pick up the garbage."

I would argue that non-partisan elections at the local level are more likely to encourage more moderate candidates because candidates are more likely to have to seek votes from across the political spectrum which may lead to elections that are more competitive. Many individuals I know that run for local office are not interested in party affiliations and simply prefer to focus on the issues that affect their city.

Opponents may argue that the absence of party labels confuses voters and that in the absence of party affiliation, unprepared voters often turn to whatever cue is available, which often ends up being that of a candidate's name. Without a doubt, name recognition and recognition of service and volunteer ship becomes more important in non-partisan elections.

I urge a do not pass on House Bill 1375

Thank for you time and I and stand for any questions.

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1/29/2019

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee.

For the record I am Amber Larson from the City of Mandan, and I was elected in June 2018 to the Mandan City Commission. I am contacting you regarding House Bill No. 1375, and specifically the proposed language that would require individuals running for local office to designate a party affiliation. I am strongly opposed to this change.

While I see the values and merits of our party structures, I feel the differences between them have little bearing on the decisions we are making at the local level. I also believe that local politics attract candidates like myself who are deeply rooted in their local community, but sometimes don't feel a strong pull to party involvement. During my run, three of my opponents publicly shared a party affiliation. While I don't think that was the cause, it is worth noting that the two of us candidates who did not follow suit won the seats.

I also believe that declaring a party affiliation would increase the cost to run in local elections. While the parties do have resources to draw upon, which I was fortunate to tap in to from both sides, keeping local elections financially attainable is a benefit to the process, candidate pool and ultimately the constituents.

I thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amber L" followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Commissioner Amber Larson

City of Mandan

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2-1-19

TO: Chairman Jim Kasper, Government & Veterans Affairs Committee

From: Debbie Kroshus, Burleigh County Recorder

RE: HB 1375

Chairman Kasper and Committee Members,

My name is Debbie Kroshus and I am the Burleigh County Recorder. I am here to oppose HB 1375, a bill relating to references to party affiliation in petitions of candidates for local elective offices. I would like to take this opportunity to request a **Do NOT Pass** on **HB 1375**.

I strongly oppose the requirement of a party designation for county offices, which include Commissioner, Recorder, Auditor, Treasurer, State's Attorney, and Sheriff. Though I have no disagreement with simple word changes like "person" to "individual", "such" to "the", the fact is this bill is trying to remove my independence from running for an office in local government that should not be defined by party lines. The county recorder's office is probably one of the least political elected offices in the state as most of what we do is already defined in North Dakota Century Code, as are other local government offices. I would tend to believe that candidates run for local offices because they do not have to declare party lines. I would not have chosen to run for county recorder 13 years ago if I had to declare a party at that time. I ran and have continued to seek re-election because I knew I was qualified and could do the job well. Not because of party affiliation.

I believe I have been re-elected to my office for a fourth term because I know how to create and balance a budget, manage staff, stay abreast on technology that affects land records, and work well with our recording partners, and legislators to effect change in legislation that affects my office. I do not believe I could have done a better job if I had declared party affiliation. There is not one job function in my office

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that a Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, or other party member could do better because they are affiliated with a party, nor do decisions made in these offices run along a party line.

When I made the decision to run for county recorder and was out campaigning the first time in 2006 as well as this last time in 2018 constituents would ask if I were Democrat or Republican. I was happy to express this office was non-partisan and I would not choose a "side" in my conversations. I believe the voters I spoke to also appreciate the fact that local government has no party affiliation.

I see many unintended consequences if this bill passes. I envision less candidates wanting to run for local offices. There is enough division at the federal and state level between party lines causing great frustration to all. This division is not prevalent in non-partisan local government; and if this bill passes it could create more tension and less firm decision making at the local level causing more cost to tax payers. Several counties appoint their Auditors, Treasurers, and Recorders. If the elected would have to declare party, is there really balance and consistency in running these offices?

If this bill passes and local candidates would have to declare party, I wonder how many candidates would put an R behind their name just so they would have a better chance of being elected? I would be very tempted if running again to use the R instead of the D or i so I could increase my chances of re-election. Would this be fair to the parties if I am not truly a Republican? I can not imagine the dollars I would need to spend to run a party based campaign at the local level. This could be another hindrance to those considering these positions. Therefore, I strongly urge you to keep local government local and away from political party politics with a **DO NOT PASS on HB 1375**.

I stand for questions.

Thank you for your time.

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TO: Chairman Jim Kasper

RE: HB 1375

Chairman Kasper and Committee Members,

My name is Katie Nadeau and I am the Ramsey County Recorder. I would like to take this opportunity to request a **Do NOT Pass** on **HB 1375**, a bill relating to references to party affiliation in petitions of candidates for local elective offices.

The requirement of a party designation for local county offices such as mine, along with other local elected offices, would put an unnecessary burden on those wanting to serve in these positions. These jobs are set out in North Dakota Century Code and an individual's political leanings do not play a part in the decisions that are required of these officials. As the County Recorder, I make decisions regarding budgets, staff, supplies and processes to ensure that my duties, as set out in the Century Code, are carried out effectively and efficiently. If a candidate is only required to declare a party on the ballot and no nomination is required, what is to keep an individual from declaring whichever party they feel gives them the best chance of getting elected? How does this increase transparency? It would completely defeat the purpose of using a party declaration to indicate to voters an individual's political philosophy and/or adherence to a set of ideas and only serves to muddy the waters and invite deception. Another concern I have is that in some cases the election of these offices would take place in the primary election. If 2 or more candidates run under the same party designation without a candidate from another party, then there will be only one candidate for the general election. In 4 of the past 5 elections in North Dakota, the primary election had less than half the number of votes cast than the general election. How does this best represent the wishes of the majority? The Recorder's office and other local offices like it are not policy makers, we do not make decisions in regards to mills and the levy of taxes. JFK once said, "Let us

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not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer, but the right answer." This is my goal as
County Recorder, therefore, I strongly urge a **DO NOT PASS** on **HB 1375**.

Thank you for your time and support.

Katie Nadeau, Ramsey County Recorder

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To: Chairman Jim Kasper, Government & Veterans Affairs Committee

February 1, 2019

Chairman Kasper and Committee Members,

My name is Kari Evenson and I am the Williams County Treasurer & Recorder. I would like to take this opportunity to request a **Do NOT Pass** on **HB 1375**, a bill relating to references to party affiliation in elections and in petitions of candidates for local elective offices.

The requirement of a party designation for local county offices, along with other local elected offices, would create a division we have not had in local government. When you go into your County Courthouse to pay your property taxes or record a deed or satisfaction of mortgage, are you concerned with whether that County Treasurer or County Recorder is a Republican or a Democrat? The position of County Treasurer or County Recorder is a full-time job with duties set out in the North Dakota Century Code. A candidate's success will depend on their abilities and not on their party affiliation. I was first elected in 1990 and have been honored to serve all the citizens of Williams County regardless of my political beliefs or theirs. North Dakota is served by many great people with varying political views and affiliations - let's not limit our choices to a party. I strongly urge you to keep local government without party affiliation with a **DO NOT PASS** on **HB 1375**.

Thank you for your time and support,

Kari Evenson, Williams County Treasurer/Recorder

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2-1-19

TO: Chairman Jim Kasper

RE: HB 1375

Chairman Kasper and Committee Members,

My name is Deborah D. Anderson and I am the Dickey County Recorder. I would like to take this opportunity to request a **Do NOT Pass** on **HB 1375**, a bill relating to references to party Affiliation in petitions of candidates for local elective offices.

The requirement of a party designation for offices such as County Commissioner, County Recorder, County Auditor, County Treasurer, State's Attorney and Sheriff along with other elected offices would put an unnecessary burden on those wanting to serve in these positions.

The fact is this bill is trying to remove our independence from running for an office in local government that should not be defined by party lines. The County Recorder's office is probably one of the least political elected offices in the state as most of what we do is already defined in North Dakota Century Code, as are other local government offices. I have been re-elected to the Recorder's Office for a third term and if I had to declare a party affiliation, I would probably not have chosen to run for this office. We, as Recorder's take pride in our work and the knowledge we have to run our offices. By having to declare a party affiliation, would possibly prevent other candidates who wish to seek election at the county level. I strongly urge you to keep local government local and away from political party politics with a **DO NOT PASS** on **HB 1375**.

Thank you for your time and support.

Deborah D. Anderson, Dickey County Recorder

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TO: Chairman Jim Kasper

RE: HB 1375

Chairman Kasper and Committee Members,

My name is Kristie Jacobson and I am the Slope County Recorder. I would like to take this opportunity to request a **Do NOT Pass** on **HB 1375**, a bill relating to references to party affiliation in petitions of candidates for local elective offices.

The requirement of a party designation for local county offices such as mine, along with other local elected offices, would put an unnecessary burden on those wanting to serve in these positions. These jobs are set out in North Dakota Century Code and an individual's political leanings do not play a part in the decisions that are required of these officials.

This is my first term of Office in Slope County. Prior to this I was the deputy. I strongly believe it is much more important to have experience in this job than what party I belong. And personally I prefer NOT to declare myself as one party or another. I feel I have the right to choose who I want to vote for by qualifications and not on party lines. I also feel this would be a big deterrent to people running for office in Slope County. It is far more important that we have qualified candidates running for office and which party they choose to belong to does not affect the office or how it needs to be run. Having candidates declare their party would only create more discord among the county offices and we have enough of that on the National level. I would prefer to keep it out of the local level. I feel people in Slope County would be less inclined to run for office if they had to declare a party. I strongly urge a **DO NOT PASS** on **HB 1375**.

Thank you for your time and support.

Kristie Jacobson, Slope County Recorder

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TO: Chairman Jim Kasper

RE: HB 1375

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2-1-19

Chairman Kasper and Committee Members,

My name is Carrie K. Krause and I am the Wells County Recorder. I would like to take this opportunity to request a **Do NOT Pass** on **HB 1375**, a bill relating to references to party affiliation in petitions of candidates for local elective offices. .

The requirement of a party designation for offices such as County Commissioner, County Recorder, County Auditor, County Treasurer, State's Attorney, and Sheriff along with other local elected offices would bring about unintended consequences. These jobs are set out in North Dakota Century Code and being party affiliated would not do anything to change the job they are elected to do. Though I have no problem with the simple word changes, the fact is this bill is trying to remove our independence from running for an office in local government that should not be defined by party lines. The County Recorder's office is probably one of the least political elected offices in the state as most of what we do is already defined in North Dakota Century Code, as are other local government offices. I believe I have been re-elected to my office because I have the knowledge to run my office efficiently and I believe by declaring a party would not have helped me to do my job any better. Some of the unintended consequences I see if this bill passes are less candidates wanting to run for local offices and the possibility of most of these offices becoming appointed which takes local control away from the constituents. I strongly urge you to keep local government local without party affiliation with a **DO NOT PASS** on **HB 1375**.

Thank you for your time and support.

Carrie K. Krause, Wells County Recorder

#6
HB 1375
2-1-19

TO: Chairman Jim Kasper

RE: HB 1375

Chairman Kasper and Committee Members,

My name is Shelly Schwab, I am the newly elected Recorder for Ransom County. I am writing this testimony to oppose HB 1375, a bill relating to references to party affiliation in petitions of candidates for local elected offices. I request a Do Not Pass on HB 1375.

I strongly oppose the requirement of a party designation for elected county offices. Declaring a party is only going to make running for the office more difficult for the candidate. Voters will be voting for their party versus the candidate's ability to do the job they are running for. I also think there is a chance for a lower number of candidate's willing to run for a county office if a party affiliation is to be declared. Party declaration has nothing to do with the responsibilities of the elected officer.

I urge you to keep local government without party affiliation with a DO NOT PASS on HB 1375.

Thank you for your time and support.

Shelly Schwab, Ransom County Recorder

NDRPA

North Dakota Recreation & Park Association •

advancing parks and recreation for quality of life in North Dakota



#7
HB 1375
2-1-19

**Testimony of Dana Schaar Jahner
North Dakota Recreation and Park Association
House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee
Opposition to HB 1375
Friday, February 1, 2019**

Chairman Kasper and Members of the Committee, my name is Dana Schaar Jahner, and I am executive director of the North Dakota Recreation and Park Association (NDRPA). NDRPA represents more than 700 members across the state, primarily park districts, and works to advance parks, recreation and conservation for an enhanced quality of life in North Dakota. I am here on behalf of NDRPA to oppose House Bill 1375.

NDRPA publishes a regular feature in our quarterly magazine called the Commissioner's Corner where we highlight the work of an elected park board commissioner and their efforts to improve parks and recreation in their community. In a recent article, one commissioner shared that she "realized how important recreation is to a community and how important it is to have people serving on those boards that are passionate, committed and focused on that mission." For each article, NDRPA asks commissioners why they decided to run for the park board, and the answer is always reflective in some way of their interest in improving the quality of life in their community through safe, affordable and accessible recreation spaces and programs. Fulfilling a park board commissioner's role in a community does not require a party declaration and may make it even more challenging to find individuals to run, especially in small communities.

Currently, local park board candidates can engage directly with their community, listen to their needs and respond to them directly, rather than relying on party affiliation to communicate positions which generally do not relate to the provision of parks and recreation services at the local level.

NDRPA supports a do not pass recommendation on HB 1375. Thank you.



City of Grand Forks

255 North Fourth Street • P.O. Box 5200 • Grand Forks, ND 58206-5200

#8
HB 1375
2-1-19
Michael R. Brown
Mayor

(701) 746-2607
Fax: (701) 787-3773

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1375
House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee
February 1, 2019

Ken Vein, City Council Member
City of Grand Forks, ND

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Ken Vein, and I am a City Council Member for the City of Grand Forks. I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and express my opposition to House Bill 1375.

In The City of Grand Forks I represent Ward 7. This is the area from the Alerus Center to Ben Franklin Elementary School between Demers Ave. and 24th Ave. S. I've been lucky enough to win the election for City Council in Ward 7 twice.

While campaigning, I get to meet a lot of my neighbors. The questions I get asked while campaigning are not about party politics but about specific city issues. Neighborhood traffic concerns, road construction and snow removal are all things we deal with as a city council. I have yet to meet a pothole with an "R" or a "D" on it.

Yes, as City Council Members we do have our own ideological philosophies. Some are more conservative while some are more moderate, but as a City Council we tackle each issue individually and do what we feel is best for our city on that particular issue.

With this form of local politics in mind, The Grand Forks City Council voted on January 22, 2019 to oppose HB 1375. We feel that keeping party politics out of local elections is the right thing for The City of Grand Forks.

The passage of House Bill 1375 is not in the best interests of the City of Grand Forks. Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully ask for a DO NOT PASS on House Bill 1375.

February 1, 2019

HB 1375

House Government and Veterans Affairs

Rep. Kasper, Chair

9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Good morning Chairman Kasper and Committee members. For the record, Blake Crosby, Executive Director of the North Dakota League of Cities.

I am here in opposition to HB 1375 which would require candidates for mayor, city council and city commission to declare a party affiliation or if none, to declare "independent".

This idea has been floating around among State legislatures for a number of years. Every state, except Hawaii, has a League of Cities, League of Municipalities, etc. with a Director and we regularly communicate on legislative issues. This idea has been discussed and the belief is that an out-of-state organization is pushing this agenda. North Dakota and Idaho are on this year's schedule.

At the NDLC Annual Conference last September, I spoke to the crowd about potential legislation and I mentioned this bill. There was a collective groan and exclamations of "NO"! You will see from the nearly 30 responses that I provided you the expression of that sentiment.

Candidates for a city office are interesting in being elected to a public office, not a political seat. Trying to turn cities into a mini-legislature is a very bad idea. They have no House, no Senate, no caucus, most only meet 12 times a year, they may have 1 of 3 forms of statutorily allowed forms of City government, etc. They are not designed to be subject to partisan politics. This bill will decrease the number of potential candidates and bring local government to a standstill as candidates will have to conform to political dogma rather than local public service.

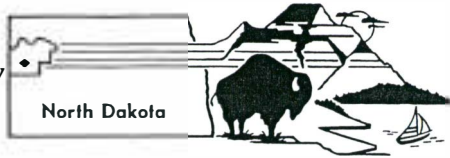
You will notice in Section 1, NDCC 16.1-11-08 that Municipal Judges are not listed as an exclusion. As this bill is written they would be included. Do we want any Judiciary to be subject to political partisanship?

You also have a list of responses from State League Directors who were asked if their state legislature passed a bill mandating declaration of a party affiliation for cities. You can see their legislative body saw the pitfalls and opted to leave their cities non-partisan.

As I said, the sentiment of cities has been shared with you and I ask for a DO NOT PASS on HB 1375.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will try to answer questions.

Watford City



#9
HB 1375
2-1-19
City of Watford City

213 2nd St. NE | P.O. Box 494

Watford City, ND 58854

Ph. 701-444-2533

Fax 701-444-3004

www.cityofwatfordcity.com

February 1, 2019

8:00 AM – Fort Union Room

Urge a DO NOT Pass on HB 1375

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs committee,

My name is Phil Riely. I am the Mayor of Watford City. Thank you for the opportunity today to ask you to recommend a **DO NOT Pass on HB 1375**.

Watford City is the fastest growing city in North Dakota. Since 2010, we have grown 274%. We are the epicenter of the Bakken and we have done everything we can over the past decade to build community capacity for oil and gas industry jobs. 50% of the state's tax collections are generated from the work borne on the backs of this industry and Bakken communities.

Many throughout the state and beyond wonder how Watford City gets things done to support North Dakota's needed workforce and to attract them and their families to western North Dakota. We have done so with nonpartisan leadership and a culture of zero tolerance for anything outside the goal of solving community problems. The city of Watford City stands with the League of Cities and the North Dakota Association of Counties to OPPOSE HB 1375. It is already difficult to cultivate candidates for elected park board, city council, county commission, and township boards. Knowing the high demand for servant leadership and objectiveness, many simply choose not to. Adding the burden of partisanship will turn additional community leaders away from elected roles locally.

Simply put, local level **PUBLIC SERVICE** is hard. Local **ELECTED LEADERSHIP** is hard. Please DO NOT add PARTISANSHIP to that list of obstacles.

Again, Chairman Kasper and members of House Government and Veterans Affairs, thank you for the opportunity to address my concerns with you and to ask you to **recommend a DO NOT Pass on HB 1375**.

Mayor Phil Riely, Watford City
(701) 570-2338
Phil_riely@yahoo.com



9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Testimony on HB 1375
Presented to the Government and Veterans Affairs House Standing Committee
Prepared by Bernie Dardis, West Fargo City Commission President
Friday, Feb. 1, 2019

1 Mr. Chairman and members of the Government and Veterans Affairs Standing
2 Committee. I would like to take this opportunity to submit my opposition to HB 1375,
3 which would require candidates running for local office to declare a political party
4 affiliation.

5 I have been active in North Dakota politics for much of my adult life, so it may
6 seem odd that I oppose this bill. However, when it comes to providing services and
7 making important decisions at the local level I believe it is of utmost important to set
8 partisan differences aside and focus on the residents. In fact, there are very few
9 situations where a local elected official's political leaning would affect a vote or policy
10 decision. As they say, "There is no Democratic or Republican way to collect garbage."
11 Furthermore, cooperation between elected officials is more likely when the focus is on
12 getting the job done and not the added complication of party politics.

13 Non-partisan elections at the local level also create a more competitive
14 landscape, where candidates are not limited to a single party representative. This
15 opens the door for many more residents to consider stepping into local politics and
16 contributing to the betterment of their community. Additionally, voters learn more
17 about the candidates and their views on specific topics, instead of relying on their
18 interpretation of the political party's platform. As an elected official without the pressure
19 of partisan politics, I have a greater ability to learn about specific issues and make
20 decisions based on what is best for my community – a value I strongly believe in and will
21 continue to espouse regardless of party politics.

22 For these reasons, I oppose HB 1375. If you have any questions, I am available at
23 bernie.dardis@westfargond.gov.

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

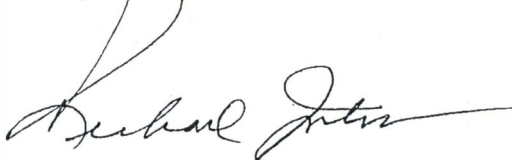
Chairman Kasper and Members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs
Committee

My name is Richard (Dick) Johnson from Devils Lake and I am currently serving as Mayor of the City of Devils Lake. Also for the record I would like to mention that I have been serving the City of Devils Lake for over 30 years, either as a Commissioner or the Mayor of our community.

I write in opposition to HB 1375 for various reasons. After having been through several election cycles, I can see no reason for having to declare a party affiliation or indicate being an independent. I am neither a Democrat nor a Republican, as I vote for the person and what that person would bring to our city government. I can also see where choosing political affiliations could cause divisions within the community. If one party is very strong in a community, but they put up a weak candidate he or she may get elected solely because of the party affiliation. On the other hand, a strong, forward thinking candidate may not win because he has chosen a party that is not as strong in the community. In municipal government we should continue to vote for the person and not because he or she is affiliated with one party or another or chooses to be independent. One final thought, we are seeing fewer and fewer citizens running for public office and think this is true for most political subdivisions, another requirement, such as would be required in HB 1375, might make potential candidates take pause because it appears that the election could become more political.

I thank you for your time to read my short comments and thank you all for your service to the State of North Dakota.

Respectfully,



Richard (Dick) Johnson

Mayor, City of Devils Lake

January 31, 2019

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Chairman Kasper, Members for the House Government, and Veterans Affairs Committee:

For the record I am Angela Haverkamp from the City of Tuttle and I am the City Auditor. I am addressing the issue of requiring persons running for local office to declare political affiliation. Please take into consideration that these "separating titles" are currently just dividing our nation and if we do not fight against it, that division will further infiltrate our state. In a small community, with years and years of "back stories" and family squabbles, it is hard enough to get a group of 4-5 council members to agree on what is the greater good for the community without bringing their conflicts of the past to the table. If you add in the dissension that goes along with being "republican", "democrat", or "independent", it will just cloud their perception and unravel those working relations even further. Just like religious affiliation, I feel that political affiliation is not between you and someone else....it's just you. Let's keep it that way. Think about this for a few seconds; when you, as aspiring legislators, go campaigning, you feel that you are qualified and able to take on that role, or else you probably wouldn't put in the effort, right? Well, how many of you have been snubbed, ignored, and have had doors shut in your face? Not because you weren't "qualified", but, because you weren't associated with the "right" political group? This is the same concept for the county and state levels as well, we should not let the gauge a person's ability to do a job effectively, be focused on how we "assume" they vote because of their political affiliation. Instead of bringing political affiliation to the forefront, we should be working towards blurring those lines and making it a thing of the past. It's time to unite so that we be able to effectively handle the future....together.

Thank you for your consideration of my viewpoint on this matter. I believe it is an important issue that we try to band together, instead of tear apart, and would like to see the legislation fail on this matter. I want to thank you, all of you, for your time, diligence, and efforts in establishing the governing laws of our state, regardless of your political affiliation.

Sincerely,

Angela Haverkamp, Auditor

Angela Haverkamp, Tuttle City Auditor

PO Box 87

Tuttle, ND 58488

(701) 226-9260

tuttlecityauditor@gmail.com

5

CITY OF LAKOTA

PO BOX 505, 108 B AVENUE EAST
LAKOTA, ND 58344
Website: lakota-nd-com

Phone 701-247-2454
Email lakotact@polarcomm.com

TDD Link 800-366-6888
FAX 701-247-2552

Mayor Jeffrey Russo
Auditor Amie Vasichok
City Attorney Douglas G. Manbeck
City Superintendent Bob Zeug

Council Members
Jim Vasichok, President
Dennis Mattern, Vice President
Rod Mattern, Tom Hess
Kris Rainsberry

January 31st, 2019


Government and Veterans Affairs
Chairman Rep. Jim Kasper
District 46

Rep. Kasper,

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. For the record I am Jeffrey Russo from the City of Lakota and I am the Mayor of our great city. I would like to write you today in my opposition of HB 1375 which would require persons running for local office to declare a political party affiliation. I believe this would cause an adverse effect on the potential for new community members running for local office. Each candidate running for public office required to make this information public could potentially create a safety issue for that individual. In addition, I do not believe this information is necessary as public information when choosing local elected officials.

I thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. Please feel free to contact me at any time to discuss further.

Respectfully,



Jeffrey Russo
Mayor
Ph (701)741-3191

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

6

9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. For the record I am Kenton Richau from the City of Golden Valley where I am elected to the City Council.

It is my belief that party politics has no place in local government therefore I am not in favor of any part of HB 1375. The current system works well and should stay in place.

Thank you for your time,

Kenton Richau

Blake Crosby

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

From:
S

Cody Cooper <cody.cooper6@gmail.com>

Thursday, January 31, 2019 10:58 AM

To:

Blake Crosby

Subject:

House Bill No. 1375

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee.

For the record I am Cody Cooper from the City of Wishek, and I am a city councilor as well as the director of the Job Development Authority.

I'd like to take a moment to speak as to the effects of HB 1375. I moved to Wishek from Minneapolis about five years ago. As an outsider, I observed Wishek operates as a Socialist Anarchist community. Our ambulance is publicly funded and voluntarily staffed. So is our Fire Department. Our Hospital holds bake sales to make up for budget gaps. However, if I tried to tell someone in town that they're a Socialist Anarchist, I would be out of city council real fast.

Being forced to identify as a political party is unimportant in small towns, as people care far more about the label than they do about what is effective. Putting the label "Socialist Anarchist" or even "Democrat" next to my name would lead people to make assumptions that conflict with what they actually know about me. This bill seems silly and pointless, destined to drive the wedge of party politics deeper into communities that need solutions rather than fights.

Sincerely,

Cody Cooper
Wishek JDA Director
S 8th St
Wishek, ND 58495
(701) 452 - 2371

Blake Crosby

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

From: Char Gust <chargust@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 29, 2019 12:27 PM
To: Blake Crosby
Subject: FW: ACTION NEEDED: Legislation Requiring Local Officials to Declare a Political Party

Message for Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee.

For the record I am Charleen Gust from the City of Casselton and I am a council member. I do not think it's necessary for city officials to declare a party. Our job is to represent the citizens in a non partisan way.

Thanks
Char Gust
701-361-2070

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

H.B. 1375

Remarks

Dwaine Heinrich
Mayor
Jamestown, North Dakota

February 1, 2019

#9
#13 1375
2-1-19

Chairman Kasper and Members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. For the record, I am Dwaine Heinrich, Mayor of the City of Jamestown.

Today I am here to speak in opposition to House Bill 1375 which would require candidates for local office to declare a political party. I am a longtime dues-paying member of the District 12 Republican Party and of the North Dakota GOP and a strong believer in our two party system which has served our state and country very well.

In my over half dozen campaigns for local office in Jamestown, not once have I asked the local Republican party for assistance. Perhaps I have been too idealistic and have taken to heart the notion that our local offices are to be non-partisan.

Local government should be conducted by engaged members of the community dedicated to sound business like government practices where their allegiance is truly to the betterment of the community and not beholden any political party or special interest group.

I do not recall a time when our local Republican party has directly or indirectly sponsored candidates in our local election. However, I would not be being honest if I told you that was true of the other party. So, what is the result of partisan politics intruding into a non-partisan area?

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. Jamestown has a five-member city council as do many city councils or city commissions in North Dakota.

I have witnessed in our local government where two individuals have been in near lock step due to their commitment to each other due to partisan politics. Two individuals voting in lock step can often control or cripple a five-member body. I was on the council during this time and it made, in my opinion, for bad city government decisions. There also will be problems created of real or imagined violations of open meetings and the side shows that will accompany those allegations. Please let's not make this a requirement.

In most of our communities it is not difficult for any informed voter to get a good idea of the political leanings of any candidate or elected official. Therefore, those concerned with partisan identities have the opportunity to support candidates for local office if they so choose who share their same partisan political leanings.

At this time Jamestown has a five-member city council that is working well together without political party or special interest control. In my opinion, the system is not broken, therefore does not need to be fixed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and if you or any other members of the committee would have any questions I would be most happy to attempt to answer them.

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Mr. Blake Crosby
ND League of Cities,
Executive Director

I would like to express my concern for any passage of ND HOUSE BILL NO. 1375.

I see no valid reason for this bill to be presented much less approved as amended.
The changes to require City Officials to declare a Political Party Affiliation when running for local City Office, in no way will improve local City Government; it will only serve to further divide our communities between 'US' and 'THEM'.

If you want to begin to FRACTURE, DIVIDE, POLARIZE, put Party above Community and eventually DESTROY 'Small Town Government' which many of us hold near and dear to us here in North Dakota, then by all means change something which is not broken.

One only need to look at the political dysfunction at the Federal and some States levels to see that, the partisanship exhibited by all parties is keeping government from functioning to the benefit of their electorate.

The voters of the State of North Dakota vote for their House & Senate candidates of their choice either by, whom they think will do the best job for them, their District, or by Party Slate, we should not be forced to do this at the City level.

For the ND House to even consider bringing this dysfunction down to the political subdivision level of a City Government is a bad idea, and will only serve to further hurt the City Government across the state of North Dakota.

If people in a small town want partisan politics, go to coffee outside your usual group of neighbors, and just listen to the opinions expressed.

I therefore ask that the committee rescind this Bill, or if that is not possible, I ask that the entire house VOTE-IT-DOWN, as a show of support for the way towns and cities across North Dakota currently elect their local officials.

Respectfully,

Bryan L. Bjornstad
President and Council member,
Arnegard City Council
Arnegard, ND

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Re: Legislation Requiring Local Officials to Declare a Political Party

Dear Chairman Kasper and the members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee:


For the record, I am Travis Frey from the City of Beulah, and I am the Mayor of Beulah. I oppose the declaring of Political Party for Local Officials in the State of North Dakota. It has been increasingly harder to find candidates for the offices of local government. The City of Beulah has 8 seats on the council and currently 6 of those positions were write-in winners. There were no names on the ballot for this positions. The positions were blank on the ballot. I believe that the declaration of a political party will only increase the lack of people interested in running for local office. This goes for the state as a whole and not just one of the many communities within our great state. Please vote against the legislation that would require declaration of political party. When it comes to local government, it is the citizens of the cities and counties that run the government and see their voting public on a daily basis.

Thank you.

Travis Frey, Mayor of Beulah

Blake Crosby


#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

 Allyn Sveen <allyn@stanleynd.us>
Tuesday, January 29, 2019 3:58 PM
To: jkasper@nd.gov; vsteiner@nd.gov; pkanderson@nd.gov; jahoverson@nd.gov;
craigjohnson@nd.gov; dljohnston@nd.gov; kkarls@nd.gov; bkoppelman@nd.gov;
vrlaning@nd.gov; sclouser@nd.gov; kmrohr@nd.gov; aschauer@nd.gov; mschneider@nd.gov;
smvetter@nd.gov
Cc: bertanderson@nd.gov; dlongmuir@nd.gov; cfegley@nd.gov; tbjones@nd.gov; Shane Goettle;
Gary Weisenberger; Blake Crosby
Subject: HB #1375

Dear Chairman Kasper and Honorable Members of the Government & Veterans Affairs Committee:

I am requesting you to support a **"DO NOT PASS"** on House Bill #1375 relating to party affiliation of candidates for city elective offices.

City elective offices in our great State of North Dakota have been elected without party designation likely since statehood. Why the change, party affiliation is irrelevant to providing quality services at the local level. The decision making process amongst elected city officials is not based or influenced by party affiliation; decisions are made for the common good of the citizens.

During the campaign process, candidates are free to state their true beliefs, rather than the beliefs of the party affiliation. 's best for the public interest can easily fall victim to what's best for the party and its contributors. In most cities, local candidates are known for the person they are, not for the party they are affiliated to.

City elections are held in June with the Primary Election, if a person is only allowed to vote for one political party, city elective offices will be determined merely by party affiliation, or in the case of three candidates being elected to office, can a voter choose to cast their vote for two parties in the case of a city election. City elections are final, and candidates do not advance to the General Election. Not sure in House Bill #1375 if the candidates will be placed on the no-party ballot or the party ballot.

Do we want local candidates elected to the party they represent or for the people they represent. Keep city elected offices non-party affiliated.

Again, your support for a **"DO NOT PASS"** on House Bill #1375 is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ms. Allyn Sveen, City Auditor
City of Stanley
208 South Main
 Box 249
Stanley, ND 58784
701-628-2225

15

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Blake Crosby



David Steele <david.steele1955@gmail.com>
Tuesday, January 29, 2019 11:32 AM
To: Blake Crosby
Subject: Fwd: HB 1375 Elected Officials declare political party

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **David Steele** <david.steele1955@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Jan 29, 2019 at 11:31 AM
Subject: HB 1375 Elected Officials declare political party
To: <jkasper@nd.gov>

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. For the record I am David Steele, from the city of Jamestown, and I am a newly elected City Council member. I am deeply concerned that citizens that are interested in serving a city or a school board would be discouraged to run for a position if one had to declare a political position. With one week remaining to pick up a petition, to gather signatures, no one had committed to run for one open seat for a city council position in Jamestown. On the final day, one other person decided to run, giving Jamestown two candidates for the position. Neither one of us has had to declare a party position and in city government actions a declaration of party makes absolutely no sense other than to discourage individuals from running. I nor the other candidate had ever run for office before and we did not differ greatly on city concerns or matters, but both of us agreed that if we would have had to declare a particular party or independent, neither one of us would have taken the step to offer our services to the community. I have spoken to many individuals, while working door to door, and nearly everyone said, thank you for stepping up and why in the world would you want to do this in the first place. Voters do not care about party affiliation when it comes to local city and school board governance. Citizens are concerned about common sense and trust in who they are electing to serve them and who they feel that they can contact and talk to when issues arise. I urge you to defeat this bill so that those that are willing to serve are not discouraged to do so simply because they must declare a political position in a non-political service to their community.

Thank you for your time,
David Steele (City Council Member from Jamestown)

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Blake Crosby

From: Char Gust <chargust@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 29, 2019 12:27 PM
To: Blake Crosby
Subject: FW: ACTION NEEDED: Legislation Requiring Local Officials to Declare a Political Party

Message for Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee.

For the record I am Charleen Gust from the City of Casselton and I am a council member. I do not think it's necessary for city officials to declare a party. Our job is to represent the citizens in a non partisan way.

Thanks
Char Gust
701-361-2070

Blake Crosby

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

From: Eric B. Gjerdevig <Eric.Gjerdevig@westfargond.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 29, 2019 1:06 PM
To: jkasper@nd.gov; bkoppelman@nd.gov; aschauer@nd.gov
Cc: Blake Crosby
Subject: House Bill 1375

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee -

I'm writing regarding House Bill 1375. My name is Eric Gjerdevig. I ran and was elected onto the West Fargo City Commission in 2018. I had a desire to serve my community but did NOT want to make it about politics and/or party affiliation. I realize there are politics in city government, but those politics are about key issues such as Special Assessments; they are not about Republican versus Democrat affiliation.

I don't need to look any farther than our national politics to understand that this bill would keep good candidates out of service to our community. Local politics should be about issues, experience, ideas, and dozens of other important factors. Making it about party loyalty will hurt local engagement by further politicizing local politics and make it harder to get the job done. Furthermore, there are such factions within both parties today I'm not even sure what party affiliation means anymore.

Let's not create an issue (by passing this bill) where one doesn't exist and lets keep local elections about the issues that will help improve our cities instead of create divisions within them.

Thanks for your service and listening.

 Gjerdevig

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

CITY OF LISBON
NORTH DAKOTA



January 28, 2019

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee,

For the record I am Tim Meyer from the City of Lisbon and I am the Mayor.

I DO NOT support this bill. I feel it would discourage citizens of my community from volunteering their time and talents to run for local government. This bill would force politics directly into the lives of community minded citizens. There are many residents I feel would no longer be willing to step forward if they are forced into politics. Thank You for your service to our state.

Tim Meyer

423 Main Street ~ PO Box 1079 ~ Lisbon, ND 58054
Phone (701) 683-4140 Fax (701) 683-9710
TDD: 1-800-366-6888

This Institution is an equal opportunity provider, and employer.

January 25, 2019

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee:

For the record I am Joan Carvell from the City of Casselton. I am a city council member.

I have been made aware of House bill 1375. I am strongly against candidates for local government having to disclose their party affiliation. City council positions are not supposed to be political. We do not choose sides, we work for the betterment of the city and its residents.

I appreciate the hard work our Legislators do and would appreciate your consideration on this matter.

Thank you for your service and time.

Joan Carvell

City of Casselton

Council Member

Blake Crosby

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

From: Kinley R. Slauter <kinleys@medora.com>
To: Blake Crosby
Subject: HB1375

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. For the record I am Kinley Slauter from the City of Historic Medora and I serve on the Medora City Council. I understand legislation regarding declaring party affiliation for city elections is being considered. I can't imagine what good it would do our community or country to introduce one ounce more partisan divide. Let voters decide based on what they know about the candidates and the facts available, not on perception of one's position based on typical or stereotypical partisan understanding. Please do hear what supporters of this bill have in mind but in the end I encourage you to not pass such legislation as it provides no benefit to a community like ours, which is very representative of many of the communities in our state. Thanks for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Kinley R. Slauter

January 26, 2019

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Honorable Chairman Kasper
and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee:

For the record, I am Charles (Chuck) Andrus from the City of South Heart, ND and I am the Mayor of this community.

I am contacting you regarding House Bill 1375. I am requesting this bill NOT be passed out of committee.

This bill is not in the best interests of local government and would very well polarize citizens further than the existing state of affairs. Dividing communities on political lines at the local level will only further divide rather than unify communities.

Please vote **against** House Bill 1375.

Best Regards,



Chuck Andrus
Mayor

City of South Heart
PO Box 249
South Heart, ND 58655

Email: candrus@ndsupernet.com
Ph: 701.290.6140

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Chairman Kasper

Members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee:

For the record I am Carol M. Siegert from the city of Hunter, ND and I serve on the Hunter City Council and also serve as Deputy Mayor for Hunter.

I am opposed to Legislation Requiring Local Officials to Declare a Political Party Affiliation.

I see absolutely no reason why a person should need to declare their political affiliation while running for a public office. For a political office, yes, however not for a public office.

Thank you for your time.

Carol M. Siegert

Hunter City Council & Deputy Hunter Mayor

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

To Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee.

For the record I am Susan Schmidt from the City of Sawyer, ND and I am the City Auditor.

Sawyer is a small city of 357 residents in North Central ND about 15 miles SE of Minot. Our City Council is made up of a Mayor and four Council members. We have a City Staff of two employees. As with most small communities, getting citizens to run for an office is next to impossible. In addition getting residents to the polls is also very difficult. Most of our elections have less than 50 actual voters, which is less than 15% of our residents who are voting age.

I wish to express my concern if House Bill No. 1375 passes.

But firstly, I must ask why must every person have a label?

Race=label, Religion=label, Gender=label, Sexual Orientation=label, Political Party choice=label.

Once someone has a label, disagreements begin and in the worst cases hate begins because of someone's assumed beliefs. Either I assume that person believes 100% the same as I believe, or that person believes 100% opposite of what I believe.

Therefore I am more likely to vote for them because of their political party label, or vote against them because of their label.

How is this a good thing?

How is this helping small communities, or any communities for that matter?

As with all good candidates, not every opinion follows 100% to the party line.

All good candidates should be able to think on their own, make decisions on their own and have viewpoints of their own, without showing loyalty to a particular party.

Voters are more likely to vote for a candidate based on their personal viewpoint rather than their loyalty to a party. I hear it time and time again, year after year that people are upset that they have to vote the party line during the primary election. People want to make a decision based on the candidate's viewpoint. Many voters skip voting to fill an office because they do not want to vote the party line.

If a candidate must now "represent" a party, they will most likely lose voter loyalty instead of increase it. If this bill passes, it is my opinion as the City Auditor of Sawyer that it will have a negative impact on people running for office, especially in small town ND. Additionally, I predict even less people will go to the polls to vote at all.

All in all, this bill is a very bad idea, and will only make the election process more removed from ALL the people the candidates are supposed to be representing.

Our government is not about what party you represent, but rather the people you represent regardless of a label.

Susan Schmidt
City of Sawyer Auditor
Sawyer, ND 58781

#9
HB 1315
2-1-19

No. It is of no importance what political affiliation a small town councilperson has. It has no bearing on how well the individual does his/her job. And in smaller communities it will inhibit people from seeking office.

Richard Cheatley
Council Member
Riverdale

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Chairman Kasper and member of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee:

For the record, I am Brad Olson from the City of West Fargo and I am a City Commissioner. I oppose this bill, as it will limit people like me, a federal government employee to run or hold office as we can only participate nonpartisan elections. The Hatch Act prohibits federal employees from participating in partisan elections. I see no reason to eliminate these people from extending their community service, by enacting this legislation.

Sincerely,
Brad Olson
West Fargo City Commissioner

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

"For the record, my name is Rory McCann and I serve on the city council for Wahpeton. As a nation, we are already divided on many levels due to political party affiliations. Local politics should be about a person's abilities and desire to help their community, not about the letter next to their name. I oppose any legislation requiring political party affiliation at the local level. It's not only unnecessary, but asinine. Thank you for your consideration.

Rory McCann
Wahpeton City Council"

Rory McCann
701-640-8999

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

January 28, 2019

Re: HB 1375

Representative Kasper and members of the Committee on Government and Veterans Affairs:

For the past six years I have served as a member of the Jamestown City Council, now serving as president of the council.

In reading this bill, I am unable to find any rationale for singling out municipal offices as in need of having the party affiliation of a candidate stated, while prohibited for other local offices.

In my campaigns for city council, including three other times for a different local office, I was never once asked to declare a party affiliation or that I was running as an independent. I was elected because the voters chose me over others, and never has any thought of partisan political affiliation entered our deliberations as a council.

I believe the singling out of these offices is arbitrary, while serving no useful purpose. I respectfully urge you to give this bill a "do not pass."

Thank you for your consideration.

Dan Buchanan
Councilperson
Jamestown, ND

House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee
Chairman Kim Koppleman

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Testimony From:
Lisa M. Olson
City of Minot, Alderman
Cell: 701-720-1853
Lisa.Olson@Minotnd.org

HB 1375

Dear Representative Koppelman,

Thank you for taking a moment to consider my testimony in opposition to HB 1375. I am not in opposition to the entire bill, but I do have serious reservations to the portion that refers to City Council Candidates, who would be required to designate which political party they belong to. This is where my question comes into play. I am interested in knowing the purpose of this amendment. I have been an Alderman with the City of Minot since 2010. The political party that I am affiliated with has never offered support during my campaigns nor have they attempted to influence my vote. If my experience is similar to many of my peers around the state, why is this amendment needed? I would suggest that it is not. It appears to be a far reaching attempt to influence municipal elections. However, as an Alderman, I strive to see both sides of a situation, so if there is a reasonable purpose in this amendment, I am very interested in knowing it. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Blake Crosby

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

F
S
To: Vicki, City Auditor <glenullinauditor@midconetwork.com>
Subject: Tuesday, January 29, 2019 9:03 AM
Blake Crosby
Opposition to bill

Thanks Blake for passing on these comments to the committee.

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee.

I am Vicki Horst, the City Auditor from Glen Ullin.

I am opposed to HB1375 40.21.07 regarding declaring a political party when running for local elections.

I think this should be an optional question, not required when completing the application for local elections. At the small town local level the elected officials are not voting on local issues as a party member they are voting on what they feel is right for the town. They aren't concerned with how their "party" would want them to vote. When the local officials are elected they are elected based on their merit or past voting record not by which party they are affiliated with. Most of our city officials would say they are not affiliated with any party and would not want to be forced to pick a party. As the city auditor would I have to reject their application because they didn't want to choose a party? Would we lose good candidates because of this issue? We cannot afford to lose any candidate that wants to run for election, we have so very few now with most officials running unopposed or no one running at all. I don't feel that naming a political party on the local election ballot would serve any purpose that would benefit the town. It seems like the political parties are looking for more members. Please remove this language from the proposed bill.

Thank you for serving our state and your consideration on this bill.

Vicki Horst

Glen Ullin City Auditor
119 South Main Street
PO Box 70
Glen Ullin, ND 58631-0070
(701) 348-3683
Glen-ullin.com

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

1/29/2019

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee.

For the record I am Amber Larson from the City of Mandan, and I was elected in June 2018 to the Mandan City Commission. I am contacting you regarding House Bill No. 1375, and specifically the proposed language that would require individuals running for local office to designate a party affiliation. I am strongly opposed to this change.

While I see the values and merits of our party structures, I feel the differences between them have little bearing on the decisions we are making at the local level. I also believe that local politics attract candidates like myself who are deeply rooted in their local community, but sometimes don't feel a strong pull to party involvement. During my run, three of my opponents publicly shared a party affiliation. While I don't think that was the cause, it is worth noting that the two of us candidates who did not follow suit won the seats.

I also believe that declaring a party affiliation would increase the cost to run in local elections. While the parties do have resources to draw upon, which I was fortunate to tap in to from both sides, keeping local elections financially attainable is a benefit to the process, candidate pool and ultimately the constituents.

I thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.



Commissioner Amber Larson
City of Mandan

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Tuesday, January 29, 2019

RE: House bill no. 1375

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government & Veterans Affairs Committee:

For the record, I am from the city of Carrington and I am the City Auditor. I would oppose any legislative changes that would require city officials to declare a political party when running for city offices.

- The focus of local elections should be on community issues and voters should vote for candidates that have similar concerns. The goal for running for city offices should be to better the city, not focus on party politics.
- While I have only been in my position for one election cycle, our city struggles with finding candidates willing to run for office. If legislative changes are made requiring the candidate to declare a political party, I feel there would be further hesitation from candidates in getting involved in city government.
- Implementing these legislative changes at a local level is a distraction from the task at hand, i.e. bringing elected officials, city employees, and residents together to better the cities in which we live and work.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Gast

Jennifer Gast
City Auditor
City of Carrington

Blake Crosby

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

From: Grant Johnson <cityofkenmare@gmail.com>
To: Blake Crosby
Subject: Testimony for HB 1375

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. For the record I am Grant Johnson from the City of Kenmare and I am the City Auditor. I would strongly recommend a no vote on HB 1375. It is my assertion that political party affiliation at the local level does not provide enough information for local elections as it is not a complete representation of the candidate's character nor their beliefs on any given topic. Generally it is more of a broad categorization for people to assign to opposite ends of a spectrum and ultimately polarize elections based on gut reaction. Being the most intimate form of government with the least distance between officials and constituents, I would recommend leaving the judgment of candidates be based on personal interactions and their intentions to help their city, not be ostracized on the basis of association with a particular political party. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Grant Johnson *Auditor*
City of Kenmare

CONTACT US
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www.kenmarend.com

#9
HB 1375
2-1-19

Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. For the record I am Kevin Bunn from the City of Enderlin and I am the City Council President. I'm contacting you regarding House Bill 1375 and urging a do not pass recommendation.

In my opinion, local leaders are to work for the benefit of the entire community, not a political party or for themselves. House Bill 1375 could potentially change this agreed upon focus by introducing the need to satisfy a local leader's personal agenda or group of leaders' agenda based on their affiliation with a political party. Local government needs diversity in its leadership and a community could lose out on good citizens who won't want to run for office because they're not willing to divulge the political party they may be normally associated. Or, like myself, don't associate with any political party by doing my research and voting for the best candidate. Again, I urge a vote of do not pass.

Thank you for taking the time to read my view and testimony on House Bill 1375.

Sincerely,



Kevin Bunn
City of Enderlin, ND
Council President

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1375

Page 1, line 2, after the first comma insert "40-21-06,"

Page 1, line 3, remove "; and to repeal section 40-21-06 of the North Dakota Century Code,"

Page 1, line 4, remove "relating to references to party affiliation in petitions of candidates for city elective offices"

Page 1, line 12, overstrike "or"

Page 1, line 13, after "instruction" insert ", or an elective county office other than county commissioner, state's attorney, and sheriff"

Page 2, line 24, overstrike "mentioned" and insert immediately thereafter "identified as no-party candidates"

Page 2, line 24, after "law" insert "as a no-party office"

Page 3, after line 29, insert:

"SECTION 5. AMENDMENT. Section 40-21-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

40-21-06. Reference to party ballot or affiliation in petition of candidate for municipal office prohibited.

No reference may be made to a party ballot nor to the party affiliation of a candidate in a petition to be filed by or in behalf of a candidate for nomination to a public office in any incorporated city in this state, except as required by section 40-21-07."

Page 4, line 18, after "candidates" insert "for city council member, city commissioner, mayor, or park board member"

Page 4, line 20, replace "independent" with "no party"

Page 5, line 7, after "individual" insert "for an office for which a party designation or no-party designation is required under section 40-21-07"

Page 5, line 9, replace "word 'independent'" with "phrase 'no party'"

Page 5, remove line 15

Renumber accordingly

February 13, 2019

2
HB 1375
2-15-19

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1375

Page 1, line 1, after "sections" insert "15.1-09-08, 15.1-09-11,"

Page 1, line 2, after the first comma insert "40-21-06,"

Page 1, line 3, remove "; and to repeal section 40-21-06 of the North Dakota Century Code,"

Page 1, line 4, remove "relating to references to party affiliation in petitions of candidates for city elective offices"

Page 1, after line 5, insert:

"SECTION 1. AMENDMENT. Section 15.1-09-08 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

15.1-09-08. School district elections - Candidate filings.

An individual seeking election to the board of a school district shall prepare and sign a document stating the individual's name ~~and~~ the position for which that individual is a candidate; and the party designated by the individual as being the party to which the individual belongs, or, if the individual chooses, identifying the individual as "no party". A candidate shall also file a statement of interests as required by section 16.1-09-02. Whether or not the election is held in conjunction with a statewide election, these documents must be filed with the school district business manager, or mailed to and in the possession of the business manager, by four p.m. of the sixty-fourth day before the election.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENT. Section 15.1-09-11 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

15.1-09-11. School district elections - Preparation of ballots.

1. At least forty days before the election, the business manager shall prepare and cause to be printed, or otherwise uniformly reproduced, an official ballot containing the names of all individuals who have indicated their intent to be candidates by meeting the provisions of section 15.1-09-08. Next to or underneath each candidate's name, the ballot must include the name of the designated party or "no party" as selected by the candidate under section 15.1-09-08. The business manager shall notify the candidates as to the time and place of the drawing for position on the ballot.
2. The ballot must be ~~nonpartisan in form~~ and include:
 - a. The words "official ballot" at the top;
 - b. The name of the school district;
 - c. The date of the election;
 - d. The number of persons to be elected to each office; and

- e. Below the list of candidates for each office, blank spaces in which names not printed on the ballot may be written."

Page 1, line 12, overstrike "or"

Page 1, line 13, after "instruction" insert ", or an elective county office other than county commissioner, state's attorney, and sheriff"

Page 2, line 24, overstrike "mentioned" and insert immediately thereafter "identified as no-party candidates"

Page 2, line 24, after "law" insert "as a no-party office"

Page 3, after line 29, insert:

"SECTION 7. AMENDMENT. Section 40-21-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

40-21-06. Reference to party ballot or affiliation in petition of candidate for municipal office prohibited.

No reference may be made to a party ballot nor to the party affiliation of a candidate in a petition to be filed by or in behalf of a candidate for nomination to a public office in any incorporated city in this state, except as required by section 40-21-07."

Page 4, line 18, after "candidates" insert "for city council member, city commissioner, mayor, or park board member"

Page 4, line 20, replace "independent" with "no party"

Page 5, line 7, after "individual" insert "for an office for which a party designation or no-party designation is required under section 40-21-07"

Page 5, line 9, replace "word 'independent'" with "phrase 'no party'"

Page 5, remove line 15

Renumber accordingly