

HB1161

House Government and Veterans Affairs

January 28th, 2021

Sophia Burroughs, not in support

Mr. Chair, Representative Jim Kasper, members of the committee representatives Ben Koppelman, Pamela Anderson, Jeff A. Hoverson, Representatives Karen Karls. Scott Louser, Jeffery J Margrum, Mitch Ostlie, Karen M Rohr, Austen Schauer, Mary Schneider, Vicky Steiner, Greg Stemna, and Steve Vetter.

Thank you for your time today, I will be testifying to urge a “do not pass” on the additions to House Bill number 1161, “that all ballots must be marked and cast thirty minutes after the last elector at the polling place who is allowed to vote receives a ballot.” As this past election has shown us, the American people are accustomed to knowing the results of an election in real time, and are in quite a bit of turmoil if they are asked to wait for their president elect. But a few short days of suspense is far better than disqualifying some voters from exercising their rights, which I believe this addition will do.

To freely and conveniently cast a vote is a hallmark of a well run democracy. When we put such a narrow time frame on voter to cast their vote, we will inadvertently disqualify some North Dakota residence from having their vote counted. To name a few demographics that would be negatively impacted by a time limit would be, individuals with visual impairments, Americans who speak English as a second language, adults with intellectual difficulties, the elderly population with slower overall movements, or persons with disabilities that slow their mobility. There are times as well that initiated measures proposed for vote are quite complicated and difficult to understand. These citizens may need addition time to vote their mind on these issues.

I do understand however that many polling stations are run by volunteers or overworked government officials. To stay late into the night to operate these stations is truly a sacrifice for our nation that should not be taken lightly. I propose an extension to this time limit to one hour. This gives sufficient time for all voters to truly participate in the democracy of the American system.

I now stand for questions.