

**Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veteran affairs Committee:**

The University of Jamestown College Republicans wish to voice our support and request yours for **HB 1447**. This bill will enable students of higher institutions of education in North Dakota to use their school issued ID to vote in the state of North Dakota.

Not only does HB 1447 enable and encourage students to vote, but it also gives students like me who are from out of state the opportunity to be active and engaged in the governing process of the state North Dakota, the state which they have chosen to call home while they pursue the next step of their life, **so long as they establish residency**. The ability to be involved in this process will give students the chance to feel as if they have some degree of impact on the policies they will live under.

The University of Jamestown College Republicans encountered this exact scenario in the months leading up to the **November Election of 2020**. While some of the members chose to vote in their home state there were some who inquired about the possibility of voting in North Dakota, and two members who wanted to vote in North Dakota rather than in their home state. We also had members that were residents of North Dakota but gave thought to the possibility of voting in the Jamestown precinct instead of the one their residency was listed in. We as a group began to look into the requirements to vote in the state or in a different precinct and if there were specific requirements pertaining to college students. After conversations with Representative Ostlie and Representative Satrom, and our own research we came to the conclusion that students who had kept their residency in their home state were unable to vote in North Dakota. We also reasoned that both non-resident students and resident students had in a sense “resided” in Jamestown for thirty **(30)** days prior to the **Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> Election** (being that classes started on August 24<sup>th</sup>, seventy-two **(72)** days prior to Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>). Those who are residents and wanted to vote in a Jamestown precinct met all the requirements to vote in that precinct, the only roadblock in the way was that their residency was not listed as their Jamestown address. This bill changes that by allowing a student to use their school issued ID that list the students Jamestown address to vote in that precinct.

The University of Jamestown College Republicans do want it to be known by the committee that we do not have any issues with the requirements to vote in the State of North Dakota, nor that we have any issues with how the state defines residency as it is stated in North Dakota Century Code, Section 54.01.26

HB 1447 also gives an incentive to District 12. That incentive being more eligible voters and the potential for a higher voter turnout. There are **1,136** students currently enrolled at **UJ**, all of whom would be eligible to vote so long as they meet the requirements set forth by the state of North Dakota. We can make an educated guess that at least two-fifths, or around four-hundred **(400)** of the students at the university are already

residents of North Dakota. It would not be out of the realm of possibility that one-fourth of the **400** were already residents within Jamestown prior to attending the university. This adds just over one-thousand **(1,000)** potential voters within **District 12, 400** of which we can assume are already North Dakota residents. It is our belief that through permitting students to vote with their school issued ID would lead to more investment by University of Jamestown students in the community of Jamestown, one that has the potential to foster a lasting commitment into the Jamestown community and the state of North Dakota, that extends past their time as a student.

The University of Jamestown College Republicans also believe that this bill will increase the overall interest and turnout of students in the vote. This was something we **attempted to encourage** on the Jamestown campus in the months prior to the election. We attempted an initiative to encourage to get students out to vote; whether it was in their home state, in their residential precinct if they were from North Dakota, or if it was in one of the Jamestown precincts. A problem we encountered with our initiative to push students to be actively engaged was **“how do I vote in Jamestown?”** Our answer was that you needed to be a resident of North Dakota and that they would need an ID such as a driver’s license that listed their Jamestown address as their residential address. Many students were turned away by this because they felt it was too complicated of a process for them to do. It is our belief that this bill **simplifies** that process and would make it easier for those who wish to be involved in the Jamestown political process to do so, which in turn would lead to a greater number of people participating in their civic duty in Jamestown precincts and the state of North Dakota as a whole.

The ability to use a school issued ID that list a person’s legal name, address, and date of birth; to vote in the state of North Dakota is something that we have recognized as beneficial to all parties. Allowing a new wave of young voters to be engaged in the process will lead to a greater investment by those voters into the state of North Dakota, with potential to keep those students in the state as they begin their professional careers. The state and communities will see benefits in the form of a more diverse voter base and a greater number of people who are interested in the growth and change within the community they have chosen to call home.

This bill gives students who have taken the steps and made the decision to be an involved member of the political process of North Dakota with greater ease than previous methods. The University of Jamestown College Republicans believe that HB 1447 will only lead to further progress for both the students and the state of North Dakota.

University of Jamestown College Republicans would feel honored to have your support on this bill. I will stand for any questions.

Thank you,

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