

Testimony HB 1447
House Government and Veteran Affairs Committee
February 18, 2021

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Government and Veterans Committee, my name is Don Morrison. I live in Bismarck and am providing testimony as a volunteer for North Dakota Voters First. We are a non-partisan group of North Dakotans working to strengthen our democracy, help make our elections and public policy more open, ethical, and accountable to the people of our state.

HB 1447 is needed to make sure college students in our state can have the type of identification that is now required to cast their ballot in North Dakota.

North Dakota's recent law change to require strict forms of photo-ID to vote has caused great difficulties for those who do not have those forms of identification. For example, many Native Americans' addresses are not recognized and the state refused to accept tribal IDs. It has taken court action and a lot of hard work to mitigate the suppression of Native American voters.

As for student voters, according to the Campus Vote Project, North Dakota is one of 7 states which have strict voter ID requirements while also not accepting student IDs. Neighboring Montana and South Dakota have in-person ID requirements, but accept alternative ID including student IDs. Minnesota uses voter registration cards and does not require an additional ID unless the voter needs to register or has changed addresses in the past 21 days.

We want people in our communities to vote so we should work to eliminate barriers and roadblocks to voting. College and university students are members of our communities. This is a good bill because it removes a roadblock for our neighbors who are college students to exercise their right to vote.

North Dakota Voters First requests that the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee give HB 1447 a DO PASS recommendation. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today.