

# The Herald-Press

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## **TO: House Industry, Business and Labor Committee Members**

**FROM: Anne Ehni, Publisher, The Herald-Press**

**RE: House Bill 1062**

**DATE: January 11, 2021**

I ask that you **vote 'NO' on HB 1062**, introduced at the request of Insurance Commissioner Godfrey.

The bill seeks to omit the requirement for insurance companies to publish in a newspaper an abstract of insurance company's annual statement. Instead, the bill proposes to provide the abstracts on the insurance commissioner's website.

To amend and reenact the proposed sections of the North Dakota Century Code as Commissioner Godfrey proposes would fail to provide public notice to the people of North Dakota.

### **Newspapers Provide the Essential Criteria of a Public Notice.**

1. **Accessible** – Every citizen in the jurisdiction affected by the notice must have a realistic opportunity to read it.
2. **Archivable** – Notices must be capable of being archived in a secure and publicly available format for the use of the judicial system, researchers and historians.
3. **Independent** – Notices must be published by organizations independent of the government body or corporation whose plans or actions are the subject of the notice.
4. **Verifiable** – There must be away to verify that each notice was actually published in accordance with the law.

Requiring independent, third-party newspapers with a financial and civic interest in ensuring that public notices run in accordance with the law was our legislative ancestors' way of verifying. As Ronald Reagan was fond of saying: "Trust, but verify."

### **Posting the public notice of insurance abstracts on the website of the Insurance Commissioner would not satisfy these criteria.**

- 86% of North Dakotans read newspaper, according to a 2020 statewide survey, and 88% say they read public notices in newspaper.
- 34% of seniors of seniors in the United States do not use the internet. 22% of people who live in rural areas don't go online.
- In the 2020 General Election, 82% of North Dakota voters (74,652 to 15,966), in 215 cities across the state, voted in favor of publishing city board meeting minutes as public notices in NEWSPAPERS. This emphasizes the truth that printed publication of public notices are read and highly regarded to the citizens of North Dakota.

**Please vote 'NO' to HB 1062.**

Sincerely,

Anne Ehni, Publisher  
The Herald-Press  
The Newspaper of Wells County, North Dakota