

Friday, February 5, 2021

House Political Subdivisions Committee HB 1349
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CHAIRMAN DOCKTER AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

My name is Jack McDonald. I'm appearing on behalf of the North Dakota Newspaper Association and the North Dakota Broadcasters Association. Surprise. Surprise. We support this bill and ask that you give it a DO PASS.

We recognize that the state's open meeting and open records laws that were substantially revised in 1997 – 24 years ago – need updating from time-to-time. No cell phones, internet, social media, web pages, etc. in 1997. HB 1394 is one of those necessary tweaks.

The changes for the most part recognize that public meetings are now often conducted by various electronic means, and will likely continue that way even after COVID.

We ask especially that you leave Section Two of the bill, beginning on page 2, line 13, intact. This retains the original intent of this legislation. There are other bills still alive that make more drastic and, we believe, unhealthy changes to this section.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'd be happy to answer any questions.