

Chairman Longmuir and members of the committee,

I am writing to you to share a story in support of SB 2229, a bill to make curling the state sport of North Dakota.

My wife and older daughter were recently stranded in Steele, ND during a snowstorm. They were returning from a daytrip to Fargo and couldn't quite make it back to Bismarck. When the roads became too dangerous, they pulled over and tried to find a hotel room. Everything was full. Fortunately, they stopped in a community that demonstrates the best North Dakota has to offer. Local residents pitched in to take care of all the stranded travelers. Cots were set up and food arrived. My family was well taken care of until they could make their way home the next day.

During their stay, my wife sent me pictures of their accommodations and of some of the volunteers preparing food. I was struck by how much it looked like the meals teams share at the curling club after league each night. When I started curling several years ago, I did not know that it is a curling tradition for one team to bring food to share with the rest of the league. That fellowship has become my favorite part of the curling season. We spend as much time off the ice together as we do on it. It shows that curling is more than a sport. It is also a community based on caring volunteerism, just like the small towns that are the backbone of North Dakota. Through the friendships I have made off the ice at curling, I know that if I ever need the type of help my family received in Steele, all I have to do is reach out to the curling community here in Bismarck. It is my "small town".

North Dakota experienced many changes prior to my family's arrival in 2019, one of them being a migration of people from small towns to larger ones. Life in small towns is not always easy and it requires a commitment to community to be truly successful. As residents leave, one can be left to wonder if the spirit that makes these communities special will survive. My family's experiences in Steele and the Capital Curling Club here in Bismarck prove that spirit is alive and well. The committed community that volunteered to help my family in Steele is the same community I break bread with each week at the curling club.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to support this bill. Voting to make curling the state sport of North Dakota is a way to recognize the many ways that North Dakotans care for and support each other. Passage of SB 2229 will enshrine a significant piece of what makes North Dakota a great place to live, its sense of community.

Sincerely,

//signed//

Colin A. Knapp
Bismarck, ND