

Tracy Foss
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Chairperson Heinert and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tracy Foss, and I am a Science Teacher at Hatton Eielson School. I am writing in support of House Bill 1516, which seeks to establish a school board observer position for teachers, allowing for greater teacher representation in the local decision-making processes.

Passing this bill will ensure teachers in all districts have the ability to communicate directly with school boards through a teacher representative, ensuring teacher perspectives are taken into account when making decisions. I have taught in three different rural North Dakota school districts. In each of those districts, teachers were permitted to watch a school board meeting, but were not allowed to offer input unless called upon. Passing this bill will ensure teachers have a formal voice in their school district as well as allow the teacher observer to add to the discussion at the time of the discussion.

Every decision made by a school board directly impacts teachers and, in turn, students. Yet, not all decisions fully take into account the practical implications for classroom instruction, student engagement, or overall school climate. Having a designated teacher observer ensures that the perspective of those working closest with students is included in discussions that shape our schools. Policies informed by direct classroom experience, are much more likely to be effective, which will improve teacher satisfaction and in turn will ultimately benefit students.

I urge you to support House Bill 1516 to ensure that teacher perspectives are not only heard but also valued in the governance of our schools. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Tracy Foss
Science Teacher
Hatton Eielson School
Hatton, ND