

HB1159
Bill Testimony
Rep. Eric J. Murphy
District 43, Grand Forks

This bill was born out of discussions with frustrated event patrons who could no longer receive paper tickets to their favorite sporting events in Grand Forks. Some learned to use the digital platform on their phones that was forced upon them, but frankly just don't understand why they could not get a paper ticket. Many of these frustrated fans just decided to stop going to sporting events, settling to forgo the excitement of the crowd for the comfort of their recliner and sofa in front of the television. Folks feel this new digital way is being forced on them and yes, many are reluctant to move forward.

In a short, this bill requires a paper ticket upon request for any event that requires a ticket for admission. As such, high school sporting events are not part of this bill as these are general admission events nor is a conference requiring registration, as this is not an event that requires a ticket to attend. This is a bill focused on permitting individuals the freedom to choose between a ticket that is virtual or one that is printed.

There is a strong potential with this bill to positively impact the ability of some fans and patrons to attend events while not being restricted to a digital requirement. The simple fact is that this current situation is not conducive to many of our residents and forcing them to comply with the demands of a changing market on the coasts is not an ideal situation for them to attend events across North Dakota.

Essentially you will hear arguments that it is fine to force people to comply to event producers demands and to the industry demands, but that giving North Dakotans an option is a poor idea. But this bill is allowing individuals a freedom of choice, which was taken away from them by onboarding online/virtual ticket options and requiring them to use those methods to attend events. Let's be honest, many will say that this bill is a poor idea because it will be an added potential cost to operations, a cost which was originally included in the paper tickets and captured in ticket prices for many event producers.

All this bill does is give event patrons a choice and a choice that does not require an extra charge per seat to print out tickets. At UND this charge is \$40 per seat for season ticket holders, but if the patron does not possess a smartphone and if the patron can demonstrate that they only have an old-style flip phone, tickets are printed at no cost. Meanwhile, 78 miles down the road, NDSU prints tickets upon request regardless of the reason. I submit that this additional fee is a mechanism to suppress choice by UND event patrons, unless of course they can "prove" that they have a phone that is not operative for the digital/virtual ticket option or are willing and able to pay an additional fee of \$40.

This bill isn't complex, and many will speak about the future...I know a lot of folks that just want a paper ticket. Not complicated, they didn't choose to go virtual. They just want a ticket and heaven forbid if we start retinal scans and fingerprint scans to get into a sport event or concert!

In the end, just because we can force folks to change, doesn't mean we should do so.