

I am writing you today in regards to 2158. I am the current Board President of Maple Valley Public School in Tower City, ND and a property tax payer across multiple counties in North Dakota including Walsh county. I rarely get involved with the legislature, but this is a really bad bill to give property tax dollars away with no plan.

I strongly recommend this bill does NOT move forward in any form and dies in committee.

Property taxes are an important topic for the legislature this year. I was really disappointed when I saw a bill like this brought forward. At a time when the people of North Dakota are demanding the legislature reduce property taxes and improve how they are used, we are discussing a bill to just give them away to another political subdivision with no plan in the bill. Measure 4 may have been a good idea if this is where my money is going.

Schools dissolve as communities decrease in size and can no longer maintain a functional district. So now the legislature wants to give that small town a check of my property tax dollars of up to \$500,000? Help me understand how this money will be used and a good use of my property taxes? I can tell you where the money will go in a small town - to someone's friend, cousin or wife to make \$50,000 a year mowing the old school lot in town. Some may tell you it will be used to maintain the building that was given to the city, which in turn is the same answer I stated above. Giving these buildings to the city is also a bad idea. You're giving the building and cash to the same communities that didn't take action to develop, grow, and be successful enough to maintain a school - that is a terrible plan. The money needs to be returned to the property tax payers.

Our district of Maple Valley School is made up of Buffalo, Oriska, Fingal, and Tower City. During my time on the board, we have sold 3 school buildings and several lots. In the case of the buildings, we have found more value in them being sold to private individuals who will develop them to better the community, rather than a political subdivision that doesn't have the resources or effort to develop a good use for the community.

If this bill passes, you will see districts increase taxes to build their carry over into dissolution in order to drive property tax dollars into their dead community. I can only imagine the miss use of funds in a city of 50 people getting \$500,000 of my property tax dollars.

In closing, quit wasting your time and others in Bismarck on a bill that gives my property tax dollars to one dead town in the state with no school- give it back to me as the law states today, it is my money.

Thank you,

Joey Bata
Oriska ND