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**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**SENATOR TODD BEARD, CHAIR**

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED BY**  
**MICHAEL HOWE, SECRETARY OF STATE**

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Chairman Beard and members of the committee, I am in full support of HB 1178. Participating in elections is a responsibility every eligible voter of the United States should carry. In the June 2024 Primary Election, we only had 20% of eligible North Dakotans participate. In the 2024 November General Election, we had 63% of eligible North Dakotans participate.

I applaud the bill sponsor, her cosponsors, and the sponsor's constituent for emphasizing the importance for our newest eligible voters that voting is a civic duty to choose our leaders for our families, friends, and neighbors. My hope is that first time voters keep coming back to participate in every election – School, City, County, Statewide, and Federal. They are all equally important.

I urge a Do Pass recommendation for HB 1178.