



Representative Anna Novak

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COMMITTEES:

Education
Energy and Natural Resources (Vice Chair)

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Re: HB1178

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee.

For the record, my name is Anna Novak, Representative from District 33. Last spring, Zofia Dostal, a very ambitious senior from Beulah High School, approached me about sponsoring a bill idea that she had. We met locally and spoke about the bill, and then met with Legislative Council so she could see the process from start to finish. What you have before you is our finished product, HB1178.

This bill essentially directs all local school boards to adopt their own policy to allow students 18 years of age and older the opportunity to vote in elections. I am going to let Zofia present the bill to you, as it was her idea and she put the work into organizing this hearing. But I'd like to make a few points before I hand it over to her:

1. Not all counties in North Dakota have multiple polling locations. Where we live - Mercer County - we have one polling location, so it can take nearly an hour to get to that single polling location, depending upon where you live.
2. I have no concerns with voting by mail. Quite honestly, that's the avenue I've voted in every election for the past eight years. I track my ballot and feel great when I see that it was both received and accepted. However, I do recognize that not everyone likes to vote by mail - for whatever reason - which is why it's important to have the opportunity to vote in-person.
3. Instead of coming up with a one-size fits all approach and mandating that different school districts follow the same policy, we decided to instruct each district to formulate their own voting policy. This approach allows us to keep the local control aspect that is important to our state.

Zofia Dostal is waiting to testify online to tell you about why this bill is important to her and to our state.

With that, I'm happy to stand for any questions the committee may have for me. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.