

Chairman Barta and committee members-

My name is Art Hagebock. I am the owner of four weekly newspapers in southeast North Dakota. They are the LaMoure Chronicle, Litchville Bulletin, Kulm Messenger, and the Enderlin Independent.

Please accept this testimony in "FAVOR" of HB 1398.

I have been in the newspaper industry since 1980. I have owned these newspapers since 2012. I also am very involved in the communities I have newspapers in. I sit on the LaMoure Community Development Board, St. Rose Care Center Board, LaMoure County Housing Authority Board, American Legion, James River Sportsman Club, Past President LaMoure Chamber, and am recently retired after fifteen years as the LaMoure Fire Department's Chief. I also attend every school board, city council meeting, and county commission meeting in LaMoure and put the stories in the paper. I do not tell you these things to be boisterous, I am telling you this because I know firsthand how vital newspapers are for the public to get their information. Anytime anyone really wants to get their information out in these towns, they put that information in the paper. The web is a great tool but has gotten so large and cumbersome that sometimes it is very hard to find what you are looking for.

I am having a real hard time comprehending the fact that the publication of the Insurance Abstracts that have been published in every newspaper for over a hundred years in every newspaper in the state is now suddenly only given to eight newspapers.

The logic behind this is that someone has interpreted the law in a different manner than what has been used for over a hundred years. Obviously, the intent of the law that was written years ago was meant so that every newspaper in the state publish these abstracts or this would have been changed years ago. If one person can interpret the law as they see fit, then why do we need legislators? If this stands as is the current policy, then every legislator, Governor, and Insurance Commissioner has been doing things illegally for a hundred years.

Please consider supporting this bill, thank you. ART HAGEBOCK