

Testimony in Opposition to HB 1297 - Relating to the prohibition of ranked-choice and approval voting in elections, relating to home rule powers in counties and cities.

Chairman Senator Roers and members of the Senate State and Local Government Committee,

My name is Connie Hoffman, resident of Fargo and lifelong resident of North Dakota. I write in opposition to House Bill 1297, relating to the prohibition of ranked-choice and approval voting in elections, relating to home rule powers in counties and cities.

In November 2018 Fargo residents voted 64% to 36% to amend the city charter to implement approval voting. Approval voting allows a voter to indicate a “yes” or “no” to each candidate so that the best candidate is elected with the most overall support of the residents.

I support the right of Fargo residents to continue to vote using the voter approved method under the Home Rule Charter, which is approval voting. I also support local control throughout ND, supporting the right of local communities to decide the voting method that best suits their needs.

I have personally found approval voting to be a very positive experience. I have asked other Fargo residents for their opinion on the process of using approval voting. People like voting for more than one candidate and are more confident that the best candidate is elected. Clear information has been provided to the public prior to elections on the process of approval voting. The ballot itself has clear directions so a voter can see which local races use approval voting and which races do not.

The use of approval voting does not dilute a person’s vote and each person who chooses to vote has an equal voice. Those advocating for this bill are attempting to overturn the will of the majority of Fargo voters who approved the use of approval voting under Fargo’s Home Rule Charter in 2018.

HB 1297 would take away local control.

I strongly urge the committee members to give HB 1297 a Do Not Pass recommendation.

Thank you.
Connie Hoffman
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