

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2215
SENATE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 14, 2025

Good Afternoon Madam Chair and Senate State and Local Committee. My name is Claire Cory. I am a North Dakota State Senator representing District 42, which includes northwest Grand Forks and the Grand Forks Air Force Base. Today, I stand as the prime sponsor introducing Senate Bill 2215, an important piece of legislation that addresses a fundamental principle of our democracy process: the separation of powers and the integrity of our legislative process. Senate Bill 2215 seeks to ban executive agencies and the judicial branch from introducing legislative bills, a measure designed to preserve the core functions of our legislative body and ensure that the voices of our constituents remain at the forefront of our policy making.

As we all know, our government was founded on the principles of checks and balances. Each branch— executive, legislative, and judicial—has its own distinct role, and it is vital that we uphold this structure. However, we have witnessed a concerning trend where executive agencies have increasingly sought to introduce their own bills. This encroachment threatens to undermine the authority of this chamber and the elected representatives we have entrusted to make laws.

I have 3 points for you:

1. Agency and judicial bills ultimately get run through our Legislative Council to be corrected for grammatical errors, formatted to our standard, etc. This ultimately takes time and cost. Here is how this would work—A Lawmaker introduces a bill for a said agency, it gets in the proper section of code, gets a full vetting process, and has a lawmaker involved in the process. This would result in less bills that are introduced for purposes of clean up code.

2. I am sure, like myself, you have heard a bill in your committee that claims to be a clean up bill or clarification, but rather it is a significant policy change. Or perhaps you heard a bill relating to a policy you are heavily involved in but question where the idea came from, I know I have. It is reality that with term limits, we are going to have less experienced lawmakers in the room to see through this.

3. The role of introducing legislative bills should rest solely with the elected representatives of the people. It is our duty to listen to our constituents, to engage with them, and to advocate for their interests. When agencies introduce legislation dictated by bureaucrats rather than by voices of the people we represent. This is not just a matter of process; it is a matter of **principle** and **democratic integrity**.

This bill is not intended to stifle the valuable input and expertise that our agencies and courts provide. On the contrary, we recognize the essential role that agencies play in informing policy decisions and offering insights based on their specialized knowledge.

Let us protect the integrity of our legislative process, uphold our democratic values, and ensure that the voices of our constituents remain at the heart of our policy making. Senate bill 2215 takes a stand for the principles that define our great democracy.

Madam Chair, this concludes my testimony, I am happy to stand for any questions.

Respectfully Submitted,



Claire Cory