

2025 HOUSE EDUCATION

HB 1251

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1251
1/20/2025

Relating to the prohibition of school extracurricular activities on certain holidays.

4:12 p.m. Vice Chairman Schreiber- Beck called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Heinert, Vice Chairman Schreiber- Beck, Representatives, Conmy, Hager, Hatlestad, Hauck, Heilman, Jonas, Longmuir, Maki, Marchall, Morton, Novak, Osowski

Discussion Topics:

- Specific Holidays time off
- Wednesday night sports

4:13 p.m. Representative Osowski introduced the bill.

4:17 p.m. Representative Schauer, North Dakota Representative, testified in favor.

4:21 p.m. Jalen Bichler, North Dakota Resident, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #30319

4:28 p.m. Aimee Copas, Director ND Council of Educational Leaders testified in opposition. #30007, #30150

4:33 p.m. Jim Haussler, Integrity of Public Affairs, testified in opposition.

Additional written testimony:

Matthew Fetsch, North Dakota High School Activities Association, submitted testimony in opposition. #30180

4:42 p.m. Chairman Schreiber- Beck adjourned the meeting.

Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk



1 Testimony Regarding House Bill 1251

2 Chairman Heinert and members of the committee, I'm representing NDCEL, and your school
3 administrators and specifically one of my groups NDIAAA which is my athletic directors, and
4 I'm also giving you perspective as a former varsity girls basketball coach. I respectfully request
5 an amendment to the bill that would remove New Year's Day as a prohibited date for school
6 extracurricular activities.

7 **Background and Rationale:**

8 Under the current provisions of this bill, schools are prohibited from holding extracurricular
9 activities on designated family days, including New Year's Day. However, the timing of school
10 events, particularly in athletics, often requires preparation and accountability in the days leading
11 up to scheduled competitions. The existing restriction creates challenges for coaches and student-
12 athletes who must prepare for events occurring immediately after this holiday.

13 **Proposed Amendment:**

14 I propose the following amendment to simply remove New Year's Day from that list:

15 The proposed amendment would provide greater flexibility for schools and student-athletes,
16 ensuring they are adequately prepared for their commitments while maintaining accountability
17 and appropriate behavior leading up to competitions. I urge the committee to consider this
18 amendment and support its adoption.



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9 activities on designated family days, including New Year's Day. However, the timing of school
10 events, particularly in athletics, often requires preparation and accountability in the days leading
11 up to scheduled competitions. The existing restriction creates challenges for coaches and student-
12 athletes who must prepare for events occurring immediately after this holiday.

13 **More conversation – change of thought**

14 After further conversation, and originally thinking that New Year's would be the only issue, I had
15 a number of administrators bring lots of issues to my attention that I hadn't even thought of...it
16 has brought us to the place that with the best of intentions – unfortunately this is a bad bill and
17 these decisions need to remain local and not be governed in code.

18 Amazing experiences that ND schools have been able to do would come to a screeching halt – It's
19 more than just about basketball practice.

- 20 • North Dakota schools have marched in the Rose Bowl on New Years Day – that would
21 be done.
- 22 • North Dakota school bands march in 4th of July Parades – this is a LONG standing
23 Mandan tradition. Done
- 24 • Some schools have had opportunities to have students raise money to participate in
25 events -band, choir, foreign language, drama, etc to participate in out of state events
26 that sometimes have travel over those days – would those opportunities end?
- 27 • State track could have issues if there are make-up days or is the school prohibited
28 from allowing the team to stay overnight and travel next day so it isn't unreasonably
29 late?

30 We have to trust local school boards to manage this decision and their employees and set
31 guidelines, for parents to understand they can make the decision for their student to
32 participate. While well intentioned – this is not a bill that needs a no vote.



North Dakota

High School Activities Association

ndhsaa.com | ndhsaanow.com | ndhsaa.net

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Mitch Lunde, Minot
 Ryan Hanson, Devils Lake
 Jason Simpenderfer, Beulah
 Adam Tescher, Bismarck

Testimony Regarding House Bill 1251

Chairman Heinert and members of the Committee. I am representing the North Dakota High School Activities Association (NDHSAA) and am submitting testimony in opposition to House Bill 1251. Although the NDHSAA does not schedule any events on the family holidays included in the bill, we believe local school board policy is the best method for determining when local schools schedule their events and conduct practices or rehearsals.

Currently it is relatively common for winter sports teams to practice on New Year's Day when they have a game scheduled on January 2nd. A prohibition on Memorial Day would likely be an issue for baseball, softball, girls soccer, and tennis teams who would be a couple days away from playing in their respective state tournament.

In the situations listed above, local school policy determines when teams are allowed to practice and does vary from school to school. This is why the NDHSAA opposes HB 1251 and believes these decisions are best handled at the local level.

HB 1251

Education Committee

Testimony of Jalen Bichler

January 20th, 2025

Madem chair and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for proposed bill to prohibit extracurricular school activities that designate specific “family days.”

It is essential to ensure that families have uninterrupted time to connect, celebrate, and recharge on some of the most significant holidays of the year. New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter Sunday as “family days” reflects a deep respect for cultural, historical, and religious traditions that hold great meaning for individuals across our state.

Extracurricular activities, while important to student growth, often demand significant time and energy from students, parents, and coaches. This bill recognizes the importance of striking a balance between school commitments and family priorities. As a past athlete having practice on some of these “family days” would hinder the traditions and plans I had with my family. It would have been nice to enjoy New Years Day and Independence Day with my family but also to have had a day to recharge my body and mental health. My family loves going on trips and “optional” practices or events are not truly optional. Imagine a family has a tradition of visiting a fallen Veteran in their family but cannot because of extracurricular activities.

I urge a “do pass” recommendation on this bill, that promotes a balanced, family-centered approach to education and extracurricular involvement. By passing this bill, you promote the value of family connections and help preserve traditions.

Thank you for your consideration, and I stand for questions at this time.

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1251
1/22/2025

Relating to the prohibition of school extracurricular activities on certain holidays.

3:04 p.m. Chairman Heinert called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Heinert, Vice Chairman Schreiber- Beck, Representatives, Conmy, Hager, Hatlestad, Hauck, Heilman, Jonas, Longmuir, Maki, Marchall, Morton, Novak, Osowski

Discussion Topics:

- Committee action

3:08 p.m. Representative Heilman moved to adopt an amendment that a school may not require a student to participate in extra circular activities. 25.0708.01001 #38411

3:08 p.m. Representative Morton seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Pat D. Heinert	N
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	N
Representative Liz Conmy	N
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	N
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	N
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Matthew Heilman	Y
Representative Jim Jonas	N
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	N
Representative Roger A. Maki	N
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	N
Representative Doug Osowski	Y

Motion failed: 5-9-0

3:20 p.m. Representative Jonas proposed an amendment for a policy regarding student participation.

3:20 p.m. Representative Longmuir seconded the motion.

3:25 p.m. Representative Jonas rescinded his motion.

3:25 p.m. Representative Longmuir seconded the motion.

3:26 p.m. Representative Jonas moved a Do Not Pass.

3:26 p.m. Representative Hatlestad seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Liz Conmy	Y
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	Y
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Matthew Heilman	N
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Y
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	N
Representative Desiree Morton	N
Representative Anna S. Novak	Y
Representative Doug Osowski	N

Motion carried: 10-4-0

Bill carrier: Representative Conmy

3:27 p.m. Chairman Heinert closed the hearing.

Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1251 ([25.0708.01000](#))

Education Committee (Rep. Heinert, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (10 YEAS, 4 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1251 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

25.0708.01001
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council
staff for Representative Heilman
January 21, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

HOUSE BILL NO. 1251

Introduced by

Representatives Osowski, Hauck, Heilman, Maki, Morton, Nehring, Schauer, Marschall

1 A BILL ~~for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15.1-06 of the North Dakota-~~
2 ~~Century Code, relating to the prohibition of school extracurricular activities on certain-~~
3 ~~holidays for an Act to amend and reenact section 15.1-06-02 of the North Dakota Century Code,~~
4 ~~relating to school extracurricular activities on holidays.~~

5 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

6 ~~SECTION 1. A new section to chapter 15.1-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is created~~
7 ~~and enacted as follows:~~

8 ~~Family days - Holidays - Extracurricular activities prohibited.~~

9 ~~A school may not hold an extracurricular activity, including a practice, game, performance,~~
10 ~~competition, meeting, or event, whether required or optional, on a family day. For purposes of~~
11 ~~this section, a "family day" means New Year's Day, Memorial Day, the anniversary of the~~
12 ~~Declaration of Independence, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day, as those terms are~~
13 ~~defined under section 1-03-01, and Easter Sunday.~~

14 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 15.1-06-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is
15 amended and reenacted as follows:

16 **15.1-06-02. School holidays.**

- 17 1. Schools may not be in session on the following holidays:
 - 18 a. Any Sunday.
 - 19 b. New Year's Day, the first day of January.
 - 20 c. Good Friday, the Friday preceding Easter Sunday.

- d. Memorial Day, the last Monday in May.
- e. The anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the fourth day of July.
- f. Labor Day, the first Monday in September.
- g. Veteran's Day, the eleventh day of November.
- h. Thanksgiving Day, the fourth Thursday in November.
- i. Christmas Day, the twenty-fifth day of December.
- j. Any day declared to be a public holiday by the President of the United States or the governor.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection 1, if the first day of January, the fourth day of July, the eleventh day of November, or the twenty-fifth day of December is a Sunday, the school district shall observe the holiday on the following Monday.

3. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection 1, if the eleventh day of November is a Saturday, the school district shall observe the holiday on the preceding Friday.

4. The board of a school district may direct that classes not be held on the day of a statewide election if the school is used as a polling place on that day.

5. A school may not require a student to participate in an extracurricular activity, including a practice, game, performance, competition, meeting, or event, on a holiday under subsection 1.