

**2025 HOUSE EDUCATION**

**HB 1387**

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1387  
1/27/2025

Relating to school closures on election days if schools are used as polling places.
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3:07 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:

- Voting in school
- Safety for children

3:07 p.m. Chairman Heinert introduced the bill.

3:16 p.m. Amber Heinert, ND Resident, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #31830

3:20 p.m. Amiee Copas, Executive Director, NDCEL, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #31647, #31648

3:25 p.m. Amy De Kok, Executive Director of the ND School Board Association, NDSBA, testified in favor.

3:28 p.m. Vice Chair Schreiber- Beck closed the hearing.

*Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk*



## **Support and Amendment Request House Bill No. 1387 - School Closures on Election Days**

We are here wishing to support the bill but are needing to ask for a much needed amendment which allows school districts the flexibility to either cancel classes or segregate students to ensure no opportunity for student contact with voters when a school is used as a polling place, is a necessary and prudent measure to ensure the safety and security of our students while maintaining the integrity of the election process.

Current bill language:

4. The board of a school district ~~may direct that classes not be held on~~ shall cancel classes on the day of a national, statewide, or local election if the school is used as a polling place on that day during regular school hours.

**Would you please consider:**

4. The board of a school district ~~may direct that classes not be held on~~ shall cancel classes or shall segregate the students to ensure there is no opportunity for student contact with the voters on the day of a national, statewide, or local election if the school is used as a polling place on that day during regular school hours.

### **Rationale for the Amendment:**

#### **Student Safety and Security:**

Schools are designed primarily for educational purposes, and the influx of the general public during elections introduces potential security concerns. Ensuring that students have no contact with voters minimizes the risk of unauthorized individuals entering restricted areas and enhances overall school safety.

With rising concerns about school security across the nation, this amendment provides school districts with the choice to either cancel classes or implement segregation measures to protect students, offering flexibility in addressing unique school layouts and security needs.

#### **Operational Efficiency:**

The presence of voters and election officials can disrupt the normal functioning of a school, impacting student learning and staff operations.

Traffic congestion, noise levels, and restricted access to facilities create logistical challenges that hinder the educational environment.

Providing districts with the choice between closing schools or segregating students allows for a tailored approach that best fits their operational capabilities and ensures minimal disruption.



**Voter Access and Experience:**

The amendment ensures that polling places remain accessible and welcoming to voters without the added complexities of navigating around students and school activities.

Allowing school districts to implement student segregation measures rather than mandating closures enables continued use of schools as polling places while ensuring voter convenience and security.

**Legal and Liability Considerations:**

Allowing students and voters to share space may expose the district to liability risks in the event of accidents, security breaches, or other incidents.

The proposed amendment provides clear guidance and legal protection for school districts by offering options to comply with best practices for public safety.

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the amendment to provide school districts with the flexibility to either cancel classes or segregate students on election days when schools are used as polling places is a critical step in safeguarding both students and voters. It supports a secure and focused educational environment while upholding the democratic process in a manner that prioritizes safety and operational efficiency. We strongly encourage the passage of this amendment to reinforce our commitment to the well-being of North Dakota students.



NDCEL Amendment Request HB1387

Current bill language:

4. The board of a school district ~~may direct that classes not be held on~~ shall cancel  
classes on the day of a national, statewide, or local election if the school is used as a  
polling place on that day during regular school hours.

Would you please consider this amendment requested by Superintendents and Business  
and Facility Managers:

4. The board of a school district ~~may direct that classes not be held on~~ shall cancel  
classes or shall segregate the students to ensure there is no opportunity for student  
contact with the voters on the day of a national, statewide, or local election if the school is  
used as a polling place on that day during regular school hours.

Amber Heinert

Bill HB 1387

Dear House Education Committee:

My name is Amber Heinert and I am addressing this committee as a concerned parent. As a resident of Bismarck, ND and citizen of District 30 I am in favor of HB 1387 as it addresses potential school closures on election days if schools are used as polling locations.

Solheim Elementary has been my voting location for the 2022 and 2024 elections. I have a few concerns regarding voting in a location with students, faculty and staff present.

As it works now for regular daily routines, students are dropped off at the front door and enter the school on his/her own. Once school starts the doors are locked and if you need to enter the school you must enter the front doors into the breeze way and ring the doorbell for the office. My concern has been on previous election days the front doors have been unlocked for voters. In the November 2024 election the gym door was available for voters to enter. Through no fault of the school, as they have taken precautions and done their best to make accommodations to limit the public access to the rest of the school, students and staff. This includes having students eat lunch in their classrooms, using the existing gate to block the gym and the office from the rest of the school and use the divider provided in the gymnasium. However, I do not feel that this is providing enough security for everyone inside the school during election hours.

If I need to pick my child up early from school for any number of reasons (doctors' appointment, got sick during the day, vacation, etc.) I need to ring the doorbell and get 'buzzed in' from the office to enter the school. To which I am limited to stay in the office until my child also arrives in the office. As a parent you are not allowed to walk to the classroom to pickup your child. This rule is in place to ensure the safety of all inside the school. With the enormous increase in school violence and shootings proper measures have been taken to provide safety to students, faculty and staff. So, my question is why are we allowing the general public to then walk openly into a school to vote?

Another concern I have is that Solheim also hosts the BLAST (Bismarck's Life After School Time) program which runs from 3:05pm-6pm on school days. During the November election students participating in this program and the BLAST Leaders were only separated from voters by the gymnasiums large curtain divider. Again, through no fault of the school as they were doing their best to make accommodations.

With the current political climate in our country and the violence in schools I feel that we can find alternative options to continue to ensure the safety of our children, our beloved teachers, administrators and staff. I would rather see a separate election location all together. However, exploring a school closure day is another option.

Thank you for your consideration on helping protect our children with HB 1387.

Sincerely,

Amber Heinert

Concerned Parent, District 30

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1387  
1/28/2025

Relating to school closures on election days if schools are used as polling places.
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2:53 p.m. Chairman Heinert called the meeting to order

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

Members Absent: Representative Novak

### Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action

2:55 p.m. Representative Schreiber-Beck moved amendment #25.1066.01001.

2:55 p.m. Representative Conmy 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	AB
Representative Matthew Heilman	Y
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Y
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	AB
Representative Doug Osowski	Y

Motion Carried: 12-0-2

3:00 p.m. Representative Schreiber-Beck moved a Do Pass as Amended.

3:00 p.m. Representative Morton seconded the motion.

<b>Representatives</b>	<b>Vote</b>
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	AB
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	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	AB
Representative Doug Osowski	Y

Motion Carried: 10-2-2

Bill Carrier: Representative Jonas

3:02 p.m. Chairman Heinert closed the hearing.

*Saydee Wahl for Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk*



January 28, 2025

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1387**

Introduced by

Representatives Heinert, Berg, Dockter, Jonas, Meier, Novak, M. Ruby

Senator Rummel

1-28-25  
JB 1082

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 15.1-06-02 of the North Dakota Century Code,  
2 relating to school closures on election days if schools are used as polling places.

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

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

6 **15.1-06-02. School holidays.**

7 1. Schools may not be in session on the following ~~holidays~~days:

8 a. Any Sunday.

9 b. New Year's Day, the first day of January.

10 c. Good Friday, the Friday preceding Easter Sunday.

11 d. Memorial Day, the last Monday in May.

12 e. The anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the fourth day of July.

13 f. Labor Day, the first Monday in September.

14 g. Veteran's Day, the eleventh day of November.

15 h. Thanksgiving Day, the fourth Thursday in November.

16 i. Christmas Day, the twenty-fifth day of December.

17 j. Any day declared to be a public holiday by the President of the United States or  
18 the governor.

19 ~~k. Any day a national, statewide, or local election is held if the school is used as a~~  
20 ~~polling place on that day during regular school hours.~~

- 1        2.    Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection 1, if the first day of January, the fourth  
2           day of July, the eleventh day of November, or the twenty-fifth day of December is a  
3           Sunday, the school district shall observe the holiday on the following Monday.
- 4        3.    Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection 1, if the eleventh day of November is a  
5           Saturday, the school district shall observe the holiday on the preceding Friday.
- 6        4.    The board of a school district ~~may direct that classes not be held on~~ shall cancel  
7           classes or separate students to ensure there is no opportunity for student contact with  
8           voters on the day of a national, statewide, or local election if the school is used as a  
9           polling place on that day during regular school hours.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
HB 1387**

**Education Committee (Rep. Heinert, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.1066.01001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (10 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1387 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

**2025 SENATE EDUCATION**

**HB 1387**

# 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Education Committee Room JW216, State Capitol

HB 1387  
3/5/2025

Relating to school closures on election days if schools are used as polling places.
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1:00 p.m. Chairman Beard called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Beard; Vice-Chairman Lemm; Senators: Axtman, Boschee, Gerhardt, and Wobbema.

### Discussion Topics:

- Building and students security
- Number of schools affected

1:00 p.m. Representative Heinert, District 32, introduced the bill.

1:06 p.m. Amy De Kok, Executive Director ND School Boards Association, testified in favor and answered committee questions.

1:11 p.m. Kevin Hoherz, Legislative Relations, ND Council of Educational Leaders, testified in favor.

1:15 p.m. Michael Howe, ND Secretary of State, testified neutral and answered committee questions.

### Additional written testimony:

Michael Heilman, Executive Director, ND Small Organized Schools, submitted testimony in favor #38818.

1:17 p.m. Chairman Beard closed the hearing.

*Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk*



# North Dakota Small Organized Schools

Mr. Michael Heilman  
Executive Director  
3144 Hampton Street  
Bismarck, ND 58504  
[mheilmanndsos@gmail.com](mailto:mheilmanndsos@gmail.com)  
701-527-4621

Mr. Brandt Dick  
President  
1929 N. Washington Steet. Ste.A  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
[Brandt.Dick@k12.nd.us](mailto:Brandt.Dick@k12.nd.us)  
701-415-0441

Mr. Steven Heim  
Vice-President  
PO Box 256  
Drake, ND 58736  
[Steve.heim@k12.nd.us](mailto:Steve.heim@k12.nd.us)  
701-465-3732

## Testimony in Support of HB 1387

Chairman Beard and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing in support of HB 1387, which grants schools the necessary flexibility to either cancel classes or remain open when elections are held in school buildings, provided students can be fully separated from voters. This bill ensures both the integrity of the election process and the safety of our students without unnecessarily disrupting learning.

By allowing school boards to determine the best course of action—whether closing the school for the day or implementing measures to keep students segregated from the voting public—HB 1387 strikes a responsible balance between civic participation and student safety. It recognizes the logistical differences among school districts and empowers local decision-makers to implement the safest and most practical solution.

I urge the committee to support HB 1387 to provide schools with the flexibility needed to maintain a secure and effective learning environment while continuing to serve as polling places when necessary.

Mr. Michael Heilman – Executive Director  
North Dakota Small Organized Schools  
[mheilmanndsos@gmail.com](mailto:mheilmanndsos@gmail.com)  
701.527.4621

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Dr. Steven Johnson, Supt. Ft. Ransom

**The mission of NDSOS is to provide leadership for the small/rural schools in North Dakota and to support legislation favorable to their philosophy while opposing legislation that is harmful.**

# 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Education Committee**  
Room JW216, State Capitol

HB 1387  
3/5/2025

Relating to school closures on election days if schools are used as polling places.
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2:12 p.m. Chairman Beard called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Beard; Vice-Chairman Lemm; Senators: Axtman, Boschee, Gerhardt, and Wobbema.

**Discussion Topics:**

- Language clarification of "no opportunity of contact"
- No student contact

2:13 p.m. Senator Axtman led committee in discussion how this bill could be mostly a local issue.

2:18 p.m. Amy De Kok, Executive Director ND School Boards Association, clarified information for the committee and answered committee questions.

2:21 p.m. Chairman Beard closed the hearing.

*Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk*

# 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Education Committee Room JW216, State Capitol

HB 1387  
4/2/2025

Relating to school closures on election days if schools are used as polling places.
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10:41 a.m. Chairman Beard called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Beard; Vice-Chairman Lemm; Senators: Axtman, Boschee, Gerhardt, and Wobbema.

### Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action

10:44 a.m. Senator Gerhardt moved Do Not Pass.

10:44 a.m. Senator Axtman seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Todd Beard	Y
Senator Randy D. Lemm	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	Y
Senator Josh Boschee	Y
Senator Justin Gerhardt	Y
Senator Mike Wobbema	Y

Motion Passed 6-0-0

Senator Axtman will carry the bill.

10:46 a.m. Chairman Beard closed the hearing.

*Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk*



**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
ENGROSSED HB 1387 ([25.1066.02000](#))**

**Education Committee (Sen. Beard, Chairman)** recommends **DO NOT PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed HB 1387 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.