

2025 HOUSE POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

HB 1431

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Political Subdivisions Committee Room JW327B, State Capitol

HB 1431
2/6/2025

Relating to district parties and district committees.

2:58 p.m. Chairman Longmuir opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Longmuir, Vice-Chairman Fegley, Vice-Chairman Jonas, Representatives Bolinske, Davis, Hager, Hatlestad, Heilman, Klemin, Motschenbacher, Ostlie, Toman, Warrey

Discussion Topics:

- Organization of precinct parties and committees
- Process of reorganizing district parties
- Duties of district officers and committee members

2:58 p.m. Representative Jared Hendrix, North Dakota Representative for District 10, introduced the bill.

3:25 p.m. Andrew Bornemann, Independent, testified in favor and provided testimony #35665.

3:45 p.m. Greg Demme, Pastor in Minot, testified in favor.

3:49 p.m. Travis Zablotney, Minot Citizen, testified in favor.

4:01 p.m. Mitch Baesler, District 37 Resident, testified in opposition and provided testimony #36599.

Additional written testimony:

John Trandem, Rules Committee Chairman of NDGOP, submitted testimony in favor #35664

Josey Milbradt, Bismarck, North Dakota, submitted testimony in favor #35809

Lee Duckworth, West Fargo, North Dakota, submitted testimony in favor #35944

John Odermann, Dickinson, North Dakota, submitted testimony in opposition #35949

4:03 p.m. Chairman Longmuir closed the hearing.

Wyatt Armstrong, Committee Clerk

House Bill 1431

Testimony in Favor

Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee,

House Bill 1431 would resolve a number of longstanding issues with our political party organizational processes by removing outdated language, inserting commonsense regulations, and clarifying ambiguous wording. These changes will help ensure fair and open processes without unnecessary meddling.

Much of this bill is simply cleaning up unnecessary language, including citations of district 'executive committees' which are not defined in this chapter at all. It also wipes out superfluous language specific to "Precinct model" redistricting, which has been optional for districts for many years and remains optional under the wording of this bill. We simply feel these issues are better left to individual districts to define in their own rules and bylaws.

In addition to these things, HB 1431 resolves a number of issues relating to the process for reorganization of districts post-census redistricting. This process had been changed near the conclusion of the last redistricting cycle, and proved to be quite cumbersome and contentious. This bill would remove a lot of confusion, by requiring every district to reorganize, and would define a better process for districts which encompass partially or wholly new territory.

Finally, HB 1431 provides that district bylaws be congruent with NDCC and State Party rules/bylaws, which will help alleviate the challenges faced by those who find themselves in a new district and need to learn a whole new process. Ensuring that District Bylaws conform to both ND Century Code and their parent organization rules will help reduce confusion across the state.

I urge this committee to vote for a "Do Pass" recommendation on HB 1431, and appreciate the opportunity to address you all today.

Sincerely, John Trandem

NDGOP Rules Committee Chair
701-729-6839
jtrandem@gmail.com

House Bill 1431

Testimony in Favor

Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee,

My name is Andrew Bornemann, I am a farmer and small business owner from Kintyre, ND. I stand in favor of HB 1431 as submitted, thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts with this committee. For reference, I served as chair of the District 28 Republican party for 5 years prior to the most recent redistricting, and am currently active in District 8 and the ND State Republican party as well. I am however testifying on behalf of myself and not in any official capacity today.

House Bill 1431 would provide some much needed updates to the ND Century Code regarding Political Party organization and processes, particularly around redistricting. Many of the changes included in this bill are simple clarifications and removal of outdated language, but there are a couple of specific things I would like to mention.

There was much confusion surrounding the process for a district party to reorganize following the last redistricting, and this bill would simplify the process significantly. First, it would require all districts to reorganize, thus removing confusion on which districts are required to reorganize. Second, it clarifies the process for who calls a meeting for a district with new territory, or one which no longer has a Chair due to the redrawn lines.

In addition, this bill would require district bylaws to not be in conflict with ND Century Code and the rules of the State Party, of which they are a subset. This simple change will help ensure that districts are in compliance with state law and State party rules.

I urge this committee to vote for a "Do Pass" recommendation on HB 1431, and would stand for any questions from this committee.

Dear Members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee,

HB1431 is a piece of legislation that aims to streamline the organization and operation of political parties within our state. By updating these sections of the North Dakota Century Code, we can ensure that our political processes are more efficient, transparent, and reflective of the current needs of each district electorate. HB1431 addresses the issue of redistricting by establishing procedures for organizing party caucuses in newly redistricted areas. This is particularly important in ensuring that all legislative districts are adequately represented and that the voices of all constituents are heard. By setting clear guidelines for the organization of party caucuses in these areas, we can promote greater participation and engagement in the political process. Currently the state party chair was given the authority to organize or select an interim district chair to organize a district after redistricting. This type of authority can be and has been used to side step the will of the district electorate.

HB1431 represents a significant step forward in improving the organization and operation of political parties in North Dakota. I urge the committee for a DO PASS on this bill to help ensure that our political processes are fair, transparent, and efficient.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Josey Milbradt

DO PASS Testimony for HB 1431

February 4, 2025

From Everett Duckworth, citizen of West Fargo, ND

1536 8th ST E

Dear chairman and members of the house.

I believe this bill will make the district process to be of better interest to more people by ensuring indemnification of the officers. We are all just volunteers, not career politicians and want to be involved but we don't need the risk.

Thanks for your consideration !

House Bill 1431

Testimony in Opposition

Rep. Longmuir and members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee,

It would set an exceptionally bad precedent for the North Dakota State Legislature to make changes to the North Dakota Century Code regarding the organizational activities of a political party to make sure that Century Code was following NDGOP state party rules and not the other way around. The NDGOP's current party rules conflict with North Dakota Century Code and they, not the state legislature, should work to be in compliance.

Using the state government to ensure local districts are complying and can be centrally governed by a state party is not something the state of North Dakota should be doing, nor is it "conservative", something the NDGOP claims to be. Centralized control over local districts should be prevented at all costs as it limits those individuals' ability to organize as they see fit, a founding principle of our Republic.

I urge you to give this a "do not pass" out of committee.

John Odermann
Dickinson, ND
john.odermann@gmail.com

TESTIMONY ON HB 1431
House Political Subdivisions Committee
February 06, 2025
By: Mitchel Baesler
701-527-5870
District 37

Chairman Longmuir and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mitch Baesler, and I live in District 37. I am here today to oppose HB 1431 because, as I read it, it seeks to align state law with political party rules rather than requiring party rules to conform to state law. State law must govern our state's political operations, not the other way around.

I am a husband, father of three children, and fifth-generation North Dakotan. I'd like to preserve our efficient and limited government.

I'd stand for any questions.

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Political Subdivisions Committee Room JW327B, State Capitol

HB 1431
2/14/2025

Relating to district parties and district committees.

9:11 a.m. Chairman Longmuir opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Longmuir, Vice-Chairman Jonas, Representatives Bolinske, Davis, Hager, Hatlestad, Klemin, Motschenbacher, Ostlie, Warrey

Members Absent: Vice-Chairman Fegley, Representatives Heilman, Toman

Discussion Topics:

- North Dakota Precinct Caucus
- Organization of rural county organization

9:13 a.m. Representative Klemin moved to Amend and remove the overstrikes on page 1 lines 14-15, page 2 lines 20-24, page 2 line 31, page 3 lines 1-2, and delete the remainder of the sentence on page 3 line 4.

9:16 a.m. Representative Ostlie seconded the motion.

9:16 a.m. Representative Jared Hendrix, North Dakota Representative for District 10, answered committee questions.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Y
Representative Clayton Fegley	A
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Macy Bolinske	Y
Representative Jayme Davis	Y
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	Y
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	Y
Representative Matthew Heilman	A
Representative Lawrence R. Klemin	Y
Representative Mike Motschenbacher	Y
Representative Mitch Ostlie	Y
Representative Nathan Toman	A
Representative Jonathan Warrey	A

9:22 a.m. Motion passed 9-0-4

9:23 a.m. Representative Bolinske moved a Do Pass as Amended.

9:23 a.m. Motion failed due to lack of a second.

9:23 a.m. Representative Ostlie moved a Do Not Pass as Amended.

9:24 a.m. Representative Hatlestad seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Y
Representative Clayton Fegley	A
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Macy Bolinske	N
Representative Jayme Davis	Y
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	Y
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	Y
Representative Matthew Heilman	A
Representative Lawrence R. Klemin	Y
Representative Mike Motschenbacher	Y
Representative Mitch Ostlie	Y
Representative Nathan Toman	A
Representative Jonathan Warrey	Y

9:26 a.m. Motion passed 9-1-3

9:26 a.m. Representative Jonas will carry the bill.

9:26 a.m. Chairman Longmuir closed the hearing.

Wyatt Armstrong, Committee Clerk

February 14, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

HOUSE BILL NO. 1431

Introduced by

Representatives Hendrix, D. Ruby

2-14-25
JB 1085

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact sections 16.1-03-01, 16.1-03-07, 16.1-03-11,
2 16.1-03-14, and 16.1-03-22 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to political
3 organizations; and to repeal sections 16.1-03-03, 16.1-03-05, 16.1-03-08, and 16.1-03-17 of the
4 North Dakota Century Code, relating to district parties and district committees.

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

6 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-03-01 of the North Dakota Century Code is
7 amended and reenacted as follows:

8 **16.1-03-01. Party caucus - Time and manner of holding - Caucus call - Notice.**

- 9 1. Each legislative district party shall organize in conformance with the state legislative
10 district boundaries as established by the legislative assembly and as set forth under
11 chapter 54-03.
- 12 2. On or before May fifteenth following the last preceding general election and after
13 redistricting of the legislative assembly becomes effective, a party caucus must be
14 held by every legislative district party. The legislative district party may organize the
15 caucus by precinct or on an at-large basis for the entire district.
- 16 3. The legislative district chairman of each party shall set the date and time for the party
17 caucus. If there is not a ~~duly-elected~~ district chairman in a legislative district, the state
18 ~~party executive~~ committee may issue the call for the caucus. The call must contain the
19 following:
20 a. Name of party.

- 1 b. Legislative district number.
- 2 c. Date of caucus.
- 3 d. Place of caucus.
- 4 e. Hours of caucus.
- 5 f. A statement of the business to be conducted, including participation requirements
- 6 established by state party and district bylaws or rules.
- 7 g. The name of the district chairman or, if there is not a ~~duly-elected~~ district
- 8 chairman, the ~~member~~name and contact information of the state party ~~executive~~
- 9 committee issuing the call.
- 10 4. The district chairman or, if there is not a ~~duly-elected~~ district chairman, the state party
- 11 ~~executive~~ committee shall provide ten days' published notice in the official newspaper
- 12 in circulation in the district. The notices must contain ~~that~~the information ~~set forth~~
- 13 ~~in provided under~~ subsection 3.
- 14 5. Within thirty days of the effective date of a redistricting of the legislative assembly, the
- 15 state committee shall issue a call of a party caucus if:
- 16 a. A district does not share any geographical area with the same numbered district
- 17 before the most recent redistricting; or
- 18 b. A district with new geographic area has a population within the new geographic
- 19 area more than twenty-five percent of the district's total population as determined
- 20 in the most recent federal decennial census.

21 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-03-07 of the North Dakota Century Code is
22 amended and reenacted as follows:

23 **16.1-03-07. Meeting of district ~~District~~ committee - Organization.**

- 24 1. If a legislative district chooses to organize by precinct in every odd-numbered year, the
- 25 district committee of each party shall meet within fifteen days after the caucus
- 26 provided for in section 16.1-03-01. The day, hour, and site must be set by the existing
- 27 district committee chairman. Any incumbent members of the legislative assembly from
- 28 the party and any other individual provided for by the district committee's bylaws
- 29 constitute the district committee of the party. ~~The~~At each party caucus, the district
- 30 committee of a party must be organized to coincide with the geographical boundary

- 1 lines of state legislative districts. Each member of any committee provided for in this
2 chapter must be a qualified elector.
- 3 2. The district committee shall select the officers of the district committee and forward to
4 the state committee the name and contact information of the district committee
5 chairman. The district committee may appoint an executive committee consistent with
6 the bylaws of the district committee. That party's nominees for and members of the
7 legislative assembly shall serve as members of the executive committee shall adopt
8 bylaws or rules which may not conflict with bylaws or rules of the state party or this
9 chapter.
- 10 3. If the office of chairman becomes vacant, the vacancy may be filled as provided by the
11 district party bylaws.
- 12 4. The bylaws of the state committee or state party may not include any requirement
13 providing directives or procedures for the method of the organization of district
14 committees ~~nor may the state committee or state party take any action or impose any~~
15 ~~requirement regarding district party organization~~ unless a district lacks a district
16 committee that is able to carry out the responsibilities under this chapter. ~~A state party~~
17 ~~may not take any action that is inconsistent with this chapter.~~
- 18 5. After redistricting of the legislative assembly becomes effective, the ~~state party chair~~
19 ~~may appoint a temporary district party organization chair in any newly established~~
20 ~~district or a district that lacks a district committee able to carry out the responsibilities~~
21 ~~of this chapter. The temporary district party organization chair shall organize the~~
22 ~~district political party as closely as possible in conformance with this chapter to assure~~
23 ~~compliance with primary election filing deadlines.~~

24 **SECTION 3. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-03-11 of the North Dakota Century Code is
25 amended and reenacted as follows:

26 **16.1-03-11. State committee - Meetings - Organization.**

27 On or before July first of each odd-numbered year, a political party shall organize a state
28 committee by electing officers as provided for by its bylaws or rules. The state committee shall
29 ~~meet on or before July first of each odd-numbered year. The committee shall organize by~~
30 ~~selecting officers as provided for by party consists of the chairman of district committees of the~~
31 party and any individual provided for under the state committee party bylaws and by adopting

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~~rules and modes of procedure, including rules and procedures regarding the selection of state convention delegates or rules. Within thirty days following the state committee's organization, the newly elected chairman shall notify the secretary of state of the names of the party officers selected~~
Within thirty days, the newly elected state chairman shall notify the secretary of state of the names of the party officers elected.

SECTION 4. AMENDMENT. Section 16.1-03-14 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

16.1-03-14. State party convention.

1. The state party state committee chairman shall set the place and time of the state party convention to be held in each general election year. Subject to party rules and bylaws, the state party convention may:
 - a. Adopt rules to govern a convention held under this section.
 - b. Nominate the legal number of elector nominees and alternate elector nominees for its party for the offices of presidential electors. The nominees must be qualified electors of this state.
 - b.c. Elect the required number of delegates and alternates to the national party convention.
 - e.d. Endorse candidates as provided under subsection 2.
2. The candidate or candidates for endorsement or election must be declared endorsed or elected under the rules of the party, and the chairman and secretary of the convention shall issue certificates of endorsement as provided in section 16.1-11-06 or certificates of election. The names of the qualified electors nominated for presidential electors the party wishes to place on the general election ballot must be certified by the chairman and secretary of the convention to the secretary of state by four p.m. on the sixty-fourth day before the general election to be placed upon the general election ballot as provided in section 16.1-06-07.1.

SECTION 5. AMENDMENT. Section 16.1-03-22 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

16.1-03-22. Liability of officers and members.

1. ~~Officers and executive committee members of a political party organization~~ are immune from civil liability for any act or omission relating to their service or function as an

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1 officer ~~or executive committee member~~, unless the act or omission constitutes gross or
2 willful negligence or gross or willful misconduct.

3 2. Members of a political organization are neither obligated to pay, nor liable upon, any
4 political organization obligation.

5 **SECTION 6. REPEAL.** Sections 16.1-03-03, 16.1-03-05, 16.1-03-08, and 16.1-03-17 of the
6 North Dakota Century Code are repealed.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1431**

Political Subdivisions Committee (Rep. Longmuir, Chairman) recommends
AMENDMENTS ([25.0969.02001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO NOT PASS** (9
YEAS, 1 NAY, 3 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1431 was placed on the
Sixth order on the calendar.