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ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

1378

2007 HOUSE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

HB 1378

2007 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. HB 1378

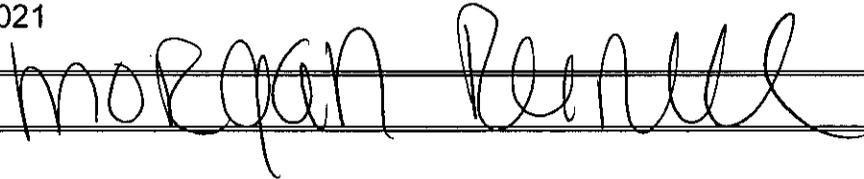
House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: January 26, 2007

Recorder Job Number: 2021

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Sen. Krebsbach: *I just want to tell you my experiences in this piece of legislation you have before you. I first came in contact of hearing about it at a conference in San Diego about three years ago or so. I became very interested because I saw great potential of a different way of voting. Not different in any respect other than inquiring the vote. Basically what it would amount to is that it would be a great potential convenience for the voter, and it could be a great cost savings to the county within the process. There is a lot of work in preparation for this to become a reality. However we know it can be accomplished. We then got to visit a site that they had in operation. Are there problems? I'm sure there are some problems related with it. However I think the gain you can get by this extraordinary. It wouldn't matter where you lived in that county, you could go vote at any place. Each of the voting centers would have the ballot for your precinct. Now how many people work in one community and they have to hurry home to vote. That happens often in rural areas. There are other people that could testify on how this would work and more about it. I just strongly urge you to take a look at it and open the new possibilities of a new voting system that would enhance the voting of people.*

Rep. Schneider: In my district for example you can live right across the street from a polling place and not go there. You might have to go several blocks away. People get confused

because of this system. A lot of people vote on their lunch breaks and such. If they go to the wrong polling place they may not have time to come back and vote later.

Sen. Krebsbach: The ballots are preprinted and they are replaced as they are running short. They would be immediately delivered to the precinct that they need to go to. This should not be an inconvenience.

Rep. Weiler: One problem that I see with this is that someone can hop around and vote like six or seven times. That wouldn't be a problem under this current bill.

Sen. Krebsbach: First of all there is a penalty, a class A Misdemeanor when people do this type of thing. When you have a computerized system, and someone has picked up their ballot, my name is going to be checked that I have my ballot already.

Rep. Haas: I think that when we went to Colorado, the different vote centers were interconnected so if I voted in one precinct it showed in another vote center that I had already voted.

Rep. Froseth: Wouldn't it show up in the poll book and not in the electronic scanner.

Rep. Haas: There poll books were electronic also.

Rep. Froseth: So the previous bill has a mechanism in an electronic poll book that can identify a voter who tries to vote more than once.

Danette Odenbach: Testimony Attached

Rep. Weiler: If there is a county that does not have the computer system throughout the county, are they going to be able to have a voting center?

Danette Odenbach: Are you asking if they don't have the resources for a poll book if they are going to be able to have a voting center?

Rep. Weiler: Correct.

Danette Odenbach: That is something that is going to have to be considered. The larger counties have the resources while the smaller counties are the ones that are going to struggle with the resources.

Rep. Weiler: Just a comment. It would seem to me if there was going to be a way to get around this. If you were in a county that didn't have the computer, I don't think they could have the voting center.

Rep. Amerman: The last bill we heard with computers was a permissive bill. If we went to where counties could have this central thing and you could vote wherever. Then that permissiveness almost goes away and now it becomes a mandate because you really can't run this without a computer system.

Jim Silrum: Testimony attached.

Jim Silrum: In addition to what Ms. Odenbach has already indicated and that is that under our current system of voting the question would have to be asked if it was possible for a person to go from one polling location to another and vote. The answer is yes. It is already possible for that to happen. What is the deterrent in law right now so there is a penalty for doing such which is a \$2,000 fine and a year in prison. Therefore, we already have the deterrence in law. We have always said that beings we are a state that dose all of our work post election. We spend our time looking for those people who have voted twice and prosecute them. Therefore with our central voter file, which is being implemented across the state. We have a much better way of tracking the voter's history of every individual in the state whether it is in one county or another.

Rep. Dahl: In my district I have a lot of students. If they don't have an ID of where they live at in that district they could still at this time go to another precinct and vote.

Jim Silrum: You are absolutely correct. That situation already currently exists. The way the state has chosen through its laws to address this issue and it is a post election status. If I voted twice the state is going to find out and the state is going to penalize you.

Rep. Meier: How often do people vote more than once?

Jim Silrum: The answer to that is not very often. Quite frankly there are times that it does happen. The state's attorneys and the clerks have tended to dismiss those situations because they are limited. Generally they happen in the following way. A person votes absentee, forgets they vote absentee, and shows up on election day and votes in person. When they show up there they say they don't remember voting absentee. With the updated central voter file that tracks the voters. Even the voter's status is all the way to the point. When a county auditor receives an absentee ballot application now, that voter's status is put into an absentee ballot status. So that already is going to mark that and when their ballot is returned it is marked. So when the ballots go out on election day it is already marked in the poll book that these people have already voted. If I may just follow the situation a little bit. In many counties when absentee ballots are coming in prior to election they are gathered and segregated according to precinct. On election day those same absentee ballots are physically taken out to the precinct itself where then during the day when there are slower periods the absentee ballots are opened by the election board and verified and tracked. It is entirely possible that if they don't get to those that someone could vote twice. In that situation what happens is when they have voted in person the absentee ballot is not counted.

Rep. Schneider: Can someone who shows up with no ID still vote?

Jim Silrum: The short answer to your question is yes. Because under current law a voter may show up at the polling place and they are going to be asked for their ID. They are going to show their ID. If they don't have one or for some reason they choose not to show that, if a poll

worker knows they are a qualified voter of that precinct they can attest for them and say they are a qualified voter of the precinct. If that fails they can vote by affidavit which is saying they swear they are who they say they are and a qualified voter of that precinct. The law also then mandates that the county auditors review every single one of those affidavits so they can check to make sure that person is who they say they are. It is an intensive process.

Mike Montplaisir: Testimony attached.

Rep. Grande: I want to go back to the polling site. I have a concern with my district. If we don't vote in the churches and schools there is nothing left. We don't have anything like this.

Mike Montplaisir: That is a concern for us. I think we have resolved most of the Fargo school district's issues. If we can go using fewer of these schools but maybe using the gymnasium where we can have more poll workers and funnel more people through in an orderly fashion, I think that will work fine. In Fargo we are never going to be able to eliminate all of the churches. The churches are good polling sites for us. Quite frankly they are very seldom used on Tuesday's. They have worked very well. If there is a funeral they will postpone the funeral until Wednesday or just have it on Monday. They will work with the families. We have been getting more and more complaints about that from the voters. At this point they aren't to the level where we would like them.

Rep. Grande: My concern is the eliminating the use of churches. In my precinct all the polling sites are churches except one. Really the options are not there otherwise. With that we have in place all kinds of ways to vote. You can vote early, they can vote absentee, etc. No one is forcing them to go to the church and vote.

Rep. Schneider: What concerns me is that this legislation is all about access. I'm afraid that some of that may be forbidden if we reduce the number of polling sites.

Mike Montplaisir: Our problem is how do we find enough workers to staff the polling sites? They are already saying that they have too many precincts in their districts, let's reduce the number of precincts. My problem is by simply reducing the number of precincts is then I have to find another location big enough where I can staff appropriately to handle the increase of voters. We have to be able to get voters in and out. Our goal is that a voter should only stand in line for 20 minutes. That is what they also have in the counties. The way they control that is a greeter hands the last person in line a piece of paper. They time how long it takes for that person to go give them that piece of paper back. We need to get the voters through there fast.

Rep. Wolf: One of the things you mentioned in favor of the voting centers is that people will know where to vote. Yet I hear in your testimony that if you have low numbers at a voting center that you will move it to someplace else. Are we going to eliminate the confusion of where do I go if every time you vote we change the location of where they are supposed to go?

Mike Montplaisir: I didn't mean to say that we are going to close the voting center. We may during that election day move some of the clerks from one voting center to another if there aren't a lot of people showing up at one. When we start doing some of this we aren't going to know where people are going to show up at the voting centers. There are going to have to be some adjustments. One of the reasons that we don't simply want to have five or six different sites is because we have to have every ballot of every precinct at the polling sites. We need to reduce the number somehow.

Rep. Amerman: I'm not sure if you can answer this question. Yesterday we heard testimony that there were 7 recounts in the state last election. They all came out fine. So if this would happen again with whatever number of recounts there might be, if the recount numbers came out fine, it would be easier for someone to challenge the votes.

Mike Montplaisir: Actually I believe that there will be less opportunity for that to happen. Right now what happens is that people show up at the wrong voting sites. Sometimes they are allowed to vote because the board doesn't recognize that they are from that precinct. The voting center will have the correct ballot style for their precinct.

Rep. Boehning: How are you going to handle the ballot location? Are you going to have all the ballots within the precinct?

Mike Montplaisir: It really doesn't change how we rotate. We still rotate the ballots by precinct. Every vote center would have every ballot style. We may reduce the number of precincts along the way so we have less ballot styles. Currently at primary elections because we have 58 precincts, 26 cities, 4 school districts, we currently have 109 different ballot styles.

If we reduce the number of precincts some ballot styles will disappear.

Rep. Haas: If this bill would pass of implementing this, would it happen in the primaries for 2008?

Mike Montplaisir: We would implement early voting in the primary of 2008. Whether or not we would go with voting centers at that time would depend on whether or not we felt comfortable handling that task. We really need to go back to the voting center concept. We thought we could get several hundred people who could vote at the voting center. We had over 400 people the first day. We had 4,000 people who voted at the early voting centers. We didn't use it this last time because there were really two problems. One was the computer system that we had were just implementing and we weren't comfortable at that point. The second problem was that the law required us to hold the early voting in a government controlled facility. The courthouse doesn't work very well for that because we have limited space. Last time we did it in the courthouse it really bogged everything down. So we started looking at what other government facilities could be utilized? The civic center in Fargo comes to mind but there is very limited

parking. The Dome comes to mind but that is out of the mainstream of traffic. When I look at voting centers I'm looking at somewhere where people have easy access. We need to also look at parking, handicap accessible, etc.

Rep. Karls: I have been a district chairman for ten years. I have always thought if we appoint a clerk and a judge from my party the other party does the same thing. This is sort of a check and balance system. Will that check and balance be eliminated if we go to a polling place?

Mike Montplaisir: I don't believe it will be eliminated. What is happening out there is that we have the election board with the judges. The clerks are additional help more or less. The clerks are really the ones that do the work. They are the ones who take the information, put it in the poll book, record things, and question whether or not that person belongs in that precinct. They are the ones that are doing the bulk of the work. Looking at the vote center concept, you are putting a political party back in charge. If you look at the diagram the judge is the greeter. If the person doesn't have the proper ID we will send them to another table where you have a couple of judges who will walk them through the affidavit process. Then they get to the clerks station we already know that they are eligible voters of that county. The clerk is getting back to the roll of clerk. As of now they are doing the judges role right now.

Rep. Karls: So in the early voting precincts and the voting centers, who appoints all these people?

Mike Montplaisir: In the early voting precincts for instance we have to follow the same procedure of getting our election workers. We go back to the district party chairs. They appoint everyone.

Rep. Karls: Burleigh County has an early voting precinct and I believe the county auditor is the one who appoints them.

Rep. Haas: Is there any more testimony for HB 1378? If not we will close the hearing on HB 1378.

2007 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. HB 1378

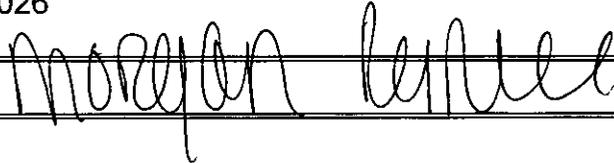
House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: January 26, 2007

Recorder Job Number: 2026

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Rep. Haas: I'm going to open this up for a pre motion discussion if there is any. What are your feelings?

Rep. Boehning: I move a do pass.

Rep. Froseth: I Second that.

Rep. Haas: Is there any discussion?

Rep. Dahl: I just need a clarification. Are these voting centers going to be two or three other places in addition to the precinct?

Rep. Haas: If you look at the chart you can see. Say that you want to Starkweather. After traveling to Larimore County in Colorado, I could see very easily how you could put a vote center in Belfield, Dickinson, and one in Richardton-Taylor. They would then take in so many precincts. All of the precincts that are represented in that one vote center, the ballot styles for all of those precincts will be available in that vote center. That is the way it works. It is a condensing of precincts having all ballot styles available for whatever precincts are represented.

Rep. Schneider: The intent of this legislation is to improve access. We have had people voting in these voting centers for 20-25 years. Now all of a sudden they are told they can't vote there? I just don't like the idea of putting more polling places up.

Rep. Boehning: I know I can't vote in my precinct because there is no place to vote. I have to go to West Acres mall. This intent would work great in Fargo. We have so many areas for school boards. We've got easy access to a lot of places. People don't have much time to vote. We have to give them all the access that we can because they have issues. They might not live in the County, they might not get off work until late. There is concern with the churches too.

Rep. Haas: I think we have to think of this concept, and it says 'may'. Any counties may use this concept. Think of it as a parallel to what we now have as early voting. So in Stark County for example, if people want to vote by absentee ballot or vote early, has to go to the courthouse. That was the vote center for early voting. All of the ballots were there for whatever precinct they lived in for whatever issue was on the ballot for their precinct. They all had to come to the courthouse in Dickinson to do the early voting. That was the vote center for that particular time. If you read the letter that I handed out from the county auditor in Stark County, she said the only comments they got were positive. I don't think its reducing accessibility. I think it makes it easier for people to vote. That is what it seems to actually do.

Rep. Amerman: One thing about early voting is that it goes on for a number of days.

Rep. Haas: That is true. Mike also mentioned that if they used this concept in Fargo they would probably have 20 vote centers instead of 56. Is there any further discussion on a do pass motion on HB 1378?

Rep. Karls: You are taking the local and pushing them into a centralized thing. Who is going to appoint the people to work in these? Does the district party come in? Where does it all come

into play if they are all hired by the auditor?

Rep. Haas: We didn't ask Mike that question.

Rep. Karls: He mentioned the voting centers in Burleigh County and I said I wasn't consulted or contacted. They may have just been staffed by the auditor's office. When you look at the diagram that is a lot of employees. How are they going to be picked?

Rep. Haas: I guess I don't see the Boogeyman in this legislation. In Fargo we have a hard time finding people to sit on election boards. For one thing they aren't paid enough and they have to have people who are able to do some of this stuff. It used to be Grandpa and Grandma's who used to sit there and have a good time. We have forced a lot of those people to disappear. I think this would work better to have less people and better trained people. I think this system will be much better.

Rep. Haas: How many irregularities and discrepancies have we had in elections in ND.

Virtually none. Do we really believe that it is absolutely necessary to have a Republican and a Democrat there because they are going to do bad things.

Rep. Froseth: I think this is all new technology and procedures. I would almost grant you right now that we will see these bills back in. We don't know how it is going to work until you tried it. There will be glitches in the procedures that we have to take care of. We won't know what they are until we tried it and go through the system.

Rep. Haas: That is a very valid point. As far as I can tell with all the testimony and conversations, the only two communities that are thinking of doing this are Fargo and Williston.

Rep. Schneider: Is there a way to conserve the current precinct process while still implementing that?

Rep. Haas: But if we make a vote center out of every precinct that is self defeating. That defeats the idea of a vote center.

Rep. Schneider: In my district you may think you vote at one place but actually vote at another. This legislation would allow you to vote at any one of those precincts.

Rep. Weiler: Your district may not be the only one that is like that. Where I live, we have Washington St. that divides district 30 and 32. There are many people that live closer to some of the voting precincts and places, and they have to go out of their way. I agree that if we do that it defeats the purpose.

Rep. Haas: Our conversation so far has so far been on voting in urban areas. My district is 95 miles one way and 85 miles the other way. Think about rural ND and think back to Stark County and the number of precincts that we have in the rural areas. The district goes from the end of Hettinger County, down south of New England all the way to Killdeer. If we put a vote center in Killdeer, you could imagine one in Killdeer, New England, Hebron, and Glen Ullin. People are still going to have to drive a number of miles. In the urban areas it is a matter of blocks that they have to drive.

Rep. Kasper: If we look at the end of line 9 on the bill, it addresses what Rep. Schneider is concerned about. Vote center polling places must serve as a designated polling place for at least one precinct in the county, in addition to serving as a site where any county voter may cast a ballot. If they had one vote center in Fargo, everybody in that county would have to be able to vote in that voting center. If they had 20 voting centers, then any resident can go to any of the centers and vote. It would open access to people.

Rep. Grande: A big part of why people are asking for something similar to this and why we are asked to do early voting precincts was because of work issues. Yes this might be awkward for where they are living. That center place is going to be way more convenient for a place to vote.

Rep. Schneider: I think we should keep all of our current polling places where they are and allow us to go to any one of those voting centers to vote.

Rep. Froseth: The way I read this, it does that. If you read lines 8 and 9 it says the qualified electors may vote early at early voting precincts by absentee ballot at the polling location of their precincts, or at a county vote center. It doesn't say it is going to close any precincts.

Rep. Schneider: That is what I love about this bill.

Rep. Meier: When I visited with Jim Silrum he said it would allow us to vote at all of these places.

Rep. Schneider: I like that about this bill. I just don't like the idea of closing a polling place that an elderly person uses.

Rep. Haas: I think we have exhausted the discussion. We will take a roll call vote on a do pass motion for HB 1378. The do pass motion passes with a vote of 10-2-1. Is there a volunteer to carry this bill?

Rep. Froseth: I will.

Date: 1-26-07
 Roll Call Vote #: 1

2007 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. "Click here to type Bill/Resolution No."

House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number HB 1378

Action Taken DO PASS

Motion Made By Boehning Seconded By Froseth

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Rep. C.B Haas Chairman	X		Rep. Bill Amerman		X
Rep. Bette Grande V.P	X		Rep. Louise Potter		
Rep. Randy Boehning	X		Rep. Jasper Schneider	X	
Rep. Stacey Dahl	X		Rep. Lisa Wolf	X	
Rep. Glen Froseth	X				
Rep. Karen Karls		X			
Rep. Jim Kasper	X				
Rep. Lisa Meier	X				
Rep. Dave Weiler	X				

Total (Yes) 10 No 2

Absent 1

Floor Assignment Rep. Froseth

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
January 26, 2007 11:41 a.m.

Module No: HR-18-1304
Carrier: Froseth
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1378: Government and Veterans Affairs Committee (Rep. Haas, Chairman)
recommends **DO PASS** (10 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING).
HB 1378 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2007 SENATE JUDICIARY

HB 1378

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. HB 1378

Senate Judiciary Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: March 13, 2007

Recorder Job Number: 4961

Committee Clerk Signature

Maria L Solbey

Minutes: Relating to polling places.

Senator David Nething, Chairman called the Judiciary committee to order. All Senators were present. The hearing opened with the following committee work:

Sen. Karen Krebsbach, Dist. #40 introduced the bill stating how many times have you wondered where to vote. This bill does not change how you vote but were you vote. How many times did you wonder where you have to go to vote and what district you are in. Imagine you are the general public. She spoke of the problem of getting poll workers. She referred to a pilot project in Colorado to have vote centers explaining that groups of people in several districts could go to one main location, a county location. Sen. Krebsbach stated how many people do not work where they vote and the difficulty this presents. She used Minot as an example (meter 4:00) The vote center has to be at the location of one of the precincts and all the ballots will be there for all of the districts.

Al Jaeger, ND Secretary of State (meter 5:59) gave his testimony- Att. #1 stating that on voting day we go a specific precinct this will would allow a County to have a center. He spoke of counties that have already done this-in the case of an early voting precinct: Stark Co. and

Cass for example. The Secretary of State spoke of current law and the times that a poll can be open. We would not proceed with this unless it will work. Our current scanners can handle 10 different precincts. He spoke of the difficulty in finding poll workers, election boards make up and the clerks being provided by the parties, new legislation to allow the County Auditor to hire.

Danette Odenbach, Assoc. of Counties (meter 13:00) gave her testimony – Att. #2

Mike Montplaisir, Cass County Auditor (meter 13:40) what a polling site would look like- Att. #4

Sen. Fiebiger (meter 20:07) questioned if the reduction of polling sites create a new problem. He replied that to reduce this there would have to be a public education campaign and we would do this.

Noel Johnson, Stutsman County auditor (meter 21:20) gave his testimony – Att. #5

Sen. Nelson made the motion to Do Pass HB 1355 and **Sen. Olafson** seconded the motion. **Sen. Olafson** had a question on the form used in the language of the bill. The committee discussed it and was ok.

All members were in favor and the motion passes.

Carrier: **Sen. Nelson**

Senator David Nething, Chairman closed the hearing.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
March 13, 2007 12:47 p.m.

Module No: SR-47-5102
Carrier: Nelson
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1378: Judiciary Committee (Sen. Nething, Chairman) recommends DO PASS
(6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1378 was placed on the
Fourteenth order on the calendar.

2007 TESTIMONY

HB 1378

Testimony To
THE HOUSE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Friday, January 26, 2007 by
Michael Montplaisir, Auditor
Cass County Government

*same to Sen. Krebs
provision*

REGARDING HOUSE BILL 1378

Chairman Haas and committee members, I am Michael Montplaisir, Cass County Auditor and I am here today in support of House Bill 1378.

In November of 2005, I had the privilege of observing an election using Vote Centers in Larimer County, Colorado with Chairman Haas, Senator Karen Krebsbach, and Danette Odenbach, HAVA Coordinator. The Vote Center concept answers some of our concerns regarding the number of polling sites, staffing of polling sites, and the process of getting the voter to the correct polling site.

In Cass County, we currently have 58 different precincts at 56 different polling sites. We are presently in a position where many of our current polling sites are less than ideal. Some are in very public places with high customer traffic and noise, some have too small of rooms to be able to allow voters enough space to cast their ballot in private, many are in schools who have raised concerns about student safety and some are in churches which make some people feel uncomfortable. We base precinct size on the available building space, taking into account both accessibility, interior circulation and available parking along with the tradition of using a particular polling site in some instances.

Vote Centers with electronic poll books would allow us to have fewer, but larger sites. Even though we would have more poll workers at each Vote Center, in total we would have fewer poll workers since we would be reducing the number of our polling sites throughout the county.

In the county and statewide elections, we are conducting elections for 10 legislative districts, 26 cities, and four school districts. Each ballot is coded with the ballot style number which identifies the districts previously mentioned and corresponds with the voter's residential precinct; matching the ballot style number in the voter's record in the electronic pollbook.

Using vote centers would alleviate voter confusion over where they need to go to vote. We have an active program, publishing precinct maps in local newspapers and providing precinct maps and a precinct finder information on our website to assist voters with finding their proper polling site. Yet, in the days leading up to and on the day of election our office and other voter advocacy groups are inundated with phone calls from voters who are trying to figure out where to go to vote. By using Vote Centers we would eliminate many of these calls because voters could go to any Vote Center within the county.

Overall, Vote Centers would help our office run elections more efficiently, making the poll worker's job easier, and eliminating voter confusion regarding where to vote.

ALVIN A. JAEGER
SECRETARY OF STATE

HOME PAGE www.nd.gov/sos



PHONE (701) 328-2900

FAX (701) 328-2992

E-MAIL sos@nd.gov

SECRETARY OF STATE
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
600 EAST BOULEVARD AVENUE DEPT 108
BISMARCK ND 58505-0500

January 26, 2007

TO: Representative Haas, Chairman,
and Members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

FR: Al Jaeger, Secretary of State

RE: HB 1378 – Vote Centers

This bill allows a county the option of having a vote center.

A vote center would have ballots available for each precinct within the county and could provide them to qualified electors living in a specific precinct.

In today's commuting society, there are voters who leave their home precinct within the county prior to the opening of the polls and who are unable to return prior to the closing of the polls. Nevertheless, they do not wish to vote with an absentee ballot. They want to vote in an actual polling location.

**TESTIMONY TO THE
HOUSE GVA COMMITTEE**

Prepared January 26, 2007 by
Danette Odenbach
North Dakota Association of Counties

*Same
given to
Senate Judiciary*

REGARDING HOUSE BILL 1378

Chairman Haas and members of the House GVA Committee:

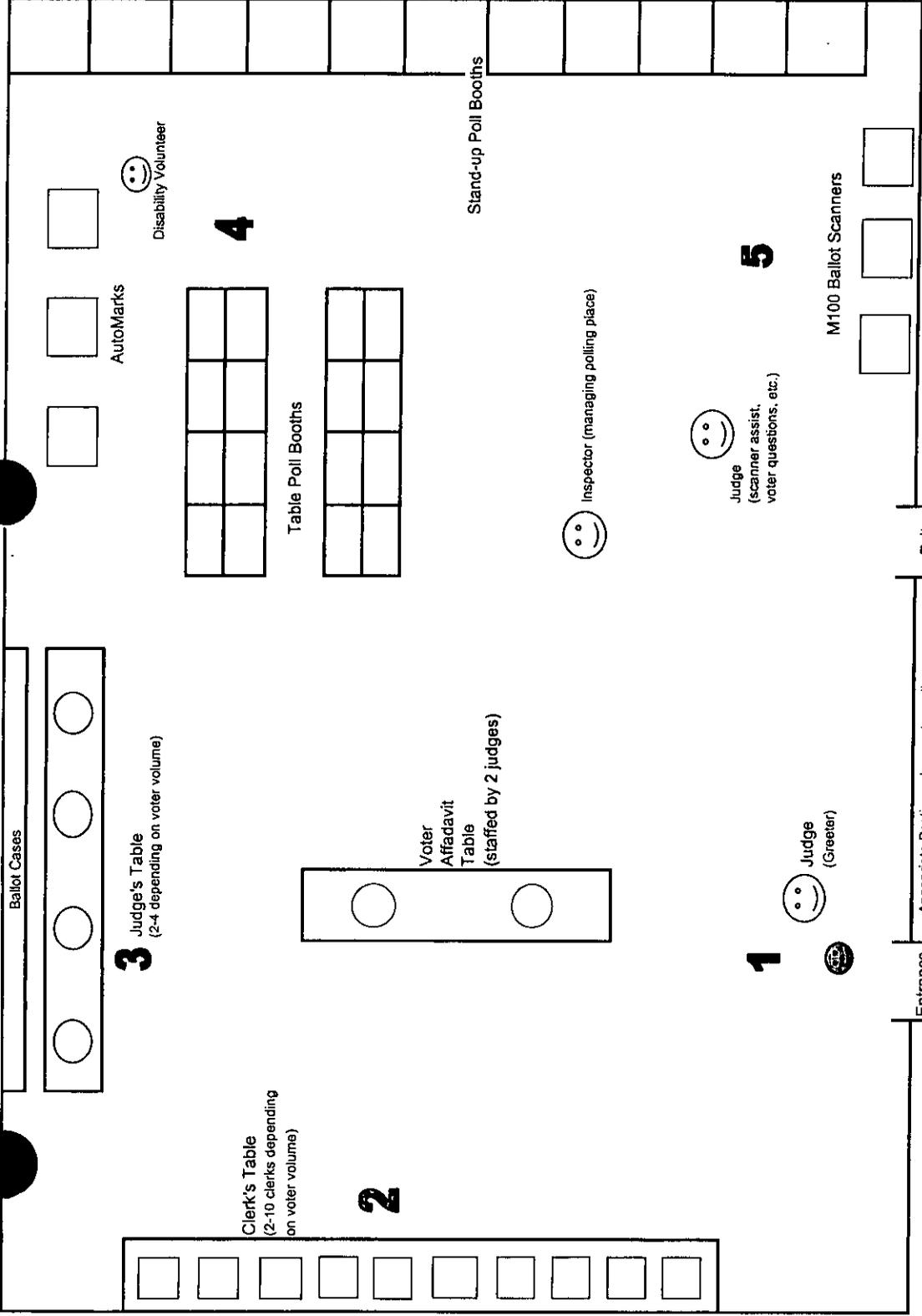
The North Dakota Association of Counties (NDACo), on behalf and at the request of the North Dakota County Auditor's Association (NDCAA), submits this testimony in support of House Bill 1378.

House Bill 1378 amends section 16.1-04 of the North Dakota Century Code to add a new subsection which would allow counties the option to utilize vote centers in addition to residential precincts.

Vote centers provide a centralized voting location where qualified electors within a county may cast their ballot on election day. The use of vote centers, especially in counties where the majority of the population works in one location but resides in other locations, allows for a more constant flow of voters throughout the day instead of sporadic peaks and valleys. Additionally, vote centers allow counties to more effectively and efficiently concentrate their resources, including personnel, equipment and materials on election day.

The concept of vote centers is new to election administration in the United States, having been created and first implemented in Larimer County, Colorado in 2003. Since 2003 the concept has spread across the county with successful implementations resulting in cost savings for counties using better voting facilities and paying fewer and more effective poll workers. Additionally, voters like vote centers because there is no wrong place to vote. If you are a qualified elector of a county, your precinct ballot is available to you at any vote center within that county.

The North Dakota Association of Counties and the North Dakota County Auditor's Association appreciate your consideration and request a Do Pass recommendation on House Bill 1378.



- Stop 1:** Judge (Greeter) would ascertain from the voter as to proper identification.
 **if voter has proper ID, greeter would have them proceed to the Clerk's Table (Stop 2).
 **if voter does not have proper ID, greeter will direct them to the Voter Affidavit Table.
- Stop 2:** Judges (2) at the Voter Affidavit table would have the voter complete the voter affidavit and then direct them to the Clerk's Table (Stop 2)
- Stop 3:** Clerks would check the voter in in the poll book, or record information if not in the poll book. They would also determine what ballot style the voter is to receive and print a slip that the voter would take to the Judge's Table (Stop 3). Clerk's table would be staffed with 2-10 clerks depending upon voter volume.
- Stop 4:** The voter would present a Judge with their slip indicating their ballot style. The judge pull the appropriate ballot, initial said ballot, and direct the voter to the poll booths or AutoMarks (Stop 4). Judge's table would be staffed with 2-4 judges depending upon voter volume.
- Stop 5:** This area would utilize stand-up poll booths, table booths and AutoMarks where voters would mark their ballots and proceed on to the M100 scanners (Stop 5). There is a possibility of having a Disability volunteer in this area to assist voters.

AH #1
3-13-07

ALVIN A. JAEGER
SECRETARY OF STATE

HOME PAGE www.nd.gov/sos



PHONE (701) 328-2900

FAX (701) 328-2992

E-MAIL sos@nd.gov

SECRETARY OF STATE
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
600 EAST BOULEVARD AVENUE DEPT 108
BISMARCK ND 58505-0500

March 13, 2007

TO: Senator Nething, Chairman,
and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

FR: Al Jaeger, Secretary of State

RE: HB 1378 – Vote Centers

This bill allows a county the option of having a vote center open on election day.

A vote center would have ballots available for each precinct within the county. A qualified voter would come to the vote center and be given the ballot that matches the specific precinct in the county in which they live.

This method of voting is already done in those counties that have chosen to open an early voting precinct as is already allowed under current law. This bill would allow the same voting method on the day of the election.

In today's commuting society, there are voters who leave their home precinct within the county prior to the opening of the polls and who are unable to return prior to the closing of the polls. Nevertheless, they do not wish to vote with an absentee ballot. They want to vote in an actual polling location. This bill would allow them to do that within the county of their residence.

Att # 5
3-13-07

Testimony to
SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 13, 2007 by
Noel A Johnson, Auditor
Stutsman County, Jamestown

REGARDING HOUSE BILL 1378

Chairman Nething and members of the committee, my name is Noel Johnson, Stutsman County Auditor. I am here in support of House Bill 1378.

Stutsman County has used a modified form of the vote center concept. We have condensed our number of voting precincts down to twelve; six precincts within the City of Jamestown, and six precincts for the remaining 64 townships and 10 smaller cities within the county.

90% of the 7,300 total votes in Stutsman County for the 2006 general election were cast in three locations within Jamestown. Nine of our twelve precincts were at these three polling locations.

Three of the six Jamestown precincts – those living in the north half of town – voted at the Jamestown Civic Center. The arena was partitioned into three sections, one for each precinct. Voters were directed to one of these three partitioned areas so they could vote in their proper precinct.

This bill would allow us to remove the partitioning within the arena. Instead of concerns over which precinct they vote in, the voters would flow to the precinct workers that had no one in line or to the precinct workers that had the shortest number of voters in line.

On election day, our phone rings constantly. The common question – where do I vote? Media advertising through newspapers, radio and television helps, but these efforts have not accommodated too large of a percentage of our voters.

Vote centers, absentee voting and early voting precincts are tools that election administrators can use to perform government's most important task – easy access to fair and efficient elections.