

Sunday, January 24, 2021

Subject: Support of House Bill 1350

Dear House Finance and Taxation Committee Members,

I have been involved in trying to pass bonds in the Williston Public School District #1 for the last 25 years. Many bonds have been put to vote but only 2 have passed. One of those bonds was for a new middle school and this passed by using the city sales tax and this is no longer available. In the last few years not only District #1 but other school districts have tried passing bonds. The bonds have failed but would have passed at 55%.

Williston Public School District #1 and Williams County School District #8 went through the Reorganization Process and it passed by both school districts so they will be Williston Basin School District #007. The Reorganization Plan needed to pass by 50% plus 1 and it did pass by both school districts which this is a huge change for many taxpayers. Yet why do we have to have 60% to pass a bond to build a school.

Over the last few years, you have heard the request that school districts need help financially to build school buildings because they are not able to pass bonds to build schools. We have heard many times that the state will not help financially in building schools. Since this is the case, give us the capability to do that. Many school bonds would have passed not just in Williams County but in other school districts in the state if only needed 55% to pass a bond.

I support this bill and hope you see this as giving the school districts the capability of passing bonds to build schools by passing this bill. Communities can deal with their issues, but we need the ways to do it!! Kids deserve to have a classroom that isn't a modular from the 1970's and there are currently around 59 modular buildings in District #1. This not only affects the students, but this also inhibits our ability as a town to recruit new professionals to our community. For example, when we are recruiting physicians (as my husband is a physician) many choose not to come to work in Williston due to the outdated school building situation. The school building is the first thing they see which they see so many classrooms that are in modular buildings not realizing the great teachers and other staff that we have. Vote yes in giving the school districts a chance to pass bonds to build schools!!

Thank you for your time,

Deb Kemp
dokemp@nemont.net
701-770-1997