



NORTH DAKOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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February 5, 2021

Chairman Kasper and Members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee,

I present today, House Bill 1496, and urge a unanimous DO PASS recommendation. House Bill 1496 is an effort to increase transparency in political campaigns which would benefit both electors and candidates.

Currently, only certain types of political organizations are required to report expenditures made in support of or opposition to candidates or ballot measures. House Bill 1496 would expand this, in Section 1, to candidates or candidate committees formed on behalf of the candidate, multicandidate political committees, and political parties other than a statewide political party soliciting or accepting contributions, and in Section 2, to statewide political parties or political committees not required to file statements under section 16.1-08.1-02.3 that are soliciting or accepting contributions. While these political entities are already required to be listed in disclaimers on advertising they purchase, the amount of the expenditure in support of or opposition to other candidates or ballot measures currently remains hidden.

Similar to reporting contributions, only expenditures over two hundred dollars would be required to be reported and the same reporting timeline would also be used, including the forty-eight hour reporting requirement for amounts over five hundred dollars.

I would like to offer an amendment to the bill to address a possible loophole that I had not previously considered caused by the current provision that a candidate whose name is not on the ballot and who is not seeking election through write-in votes, the candidate's candidate committee, and a political party that has not endorsed or nominated any candidate in the election is not required to file a statement under this subsection. The amendment would be on Page 1 Line 21 after "subsection" and on Page 4 Line 26 after "statement under this subsection" insert ", unless an aggregated expenditure over two hundred dollars is made to, in support of, or in opposition to a candidate, political committee, or political party."

Another amendment to consider would be to remove the name and mailing address of the recipient from the expenditure reporting requirement as my intention was to focus on reporting the amount and the person in support of or in opposition to whom the expenditure was made.

Let's give the public the transparency they deserve in passing HB 1496.