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2003 HOUSE EDUCATION

HB 1156

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2003 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1156

House Education Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date January 20, 2003

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	x		160-3157
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Linda Guenther</i>			

Minutes:

Chairman Kelsch opened the hearing on HB 1156.

Rep Bellew, District 38, Minot, ND. See Attached Testimony

Rep. Hunsakor : Visiting with my constituents is the main reason for this is that they are still at the lake and vacationing.

Rep. Herbel Do you have any problem with taking the control away form the local school districts?

Rep. Bellew: I'm not prepared to answer that.

Rep. Jon Nelson We have heard this before. It is dangerous to legislate school opening, but the high school activities association begins their fall sports training schedule in early August. After their 10 practices, they can have a game and that's when school starts. And like you said it is hot in Aug. and Sept. But on the flip side, it can be hot in May also. Local control dictated when they want to start. Isn't that dangerous to take away from local districts?

Bellew: I don't have an answer for that.

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Rep. Meler Do you know if these two constituents had went to the local school board to visit about this issue.

Bellew: No I do not.

Rep. Williams Many of centers have vocational centers connected to them, for example NDSSSS, all of the schools get together, they come up with the common start date.

Rep. Mueller Are you aware of any school districts already doing this.

Bellew: To my knowledge I'm not aware of any.

Patty Lewis, ND Hospitality Association.

(676) The assoc. is in support of this bill. The whole issue that the month of June is a very unpredictable month to vacation for families, July becomes more predictable and by August you are into all the athletics. You really only give families one month to vacation. If you don't vacation, then you don't get one. Has a big impact on the hotel industry, restaurant, camping, recreation. I don't have exact numbers, and I apologize that Tourism department would have them.

Rep. Jon Nelson Someone form Tourism had made a comment that 1 day in June is worth xx and 1 day in Aug. is worth x. The economic activity is so much greater in Aug. Do you track the impact on the state?

Lewis: Tourism Department may have that information.

Sandy Clark, ND Farm Bureau

We do have policy regarding HB 1156, most ranchers and farmers are still very busy during this time. Starting after Labor day, would keep the children home to help. Athletics schedules often control what schools can start and not as much local control because of all the activities.

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Rep. Hawken: Not all the crops are out of the field by August, so then we just wouldn't have school. If we were going to be concerned about all these things.

Clark: There is usually more concern about the wheat crop off before frost.

OPPOSITION

Bev Nielsen: ND School Boards Association

We could just play the tape from past sessions on this bill. But I would like to take the opportunity to comment on some other issues. NCLB will put additional accountability on the local school districts. We feel it is even more important that educational decisions be made for educational reasons. Not Tourism and Agricultural. I didn't hear any educational reasons for starting school later. But if it is for temp. then the law should say when the temp drops below a certain degree for at least one week. If is because of child labor issues then maybe it would say after the crops are in. Students are ready to be done in May and after being off for several months in the summer, are ready to come back.. Let the local community negotiate their own calendars.

Mary Wahl, ND Council of Educational Leaders.

In sessions since 1997, addressing this issue, by the sound of it you have revisited this issue several times since then. Because of the frequency of the bill that is presented to you addressing this issue, you may conclude that where there is smoke there is fire. May be there is a need. You might conclude the majority of the school patrons around the state do indeed what to start school after Labor Day. And that their wishes are being ignored by local school boards. And if you conclude that you might just think we need to do something as a Legislature. So that school will start after labor Day.

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School boards have traditionally had the responsibility to establish the school calendar. This can be used simply as a local control issue. But it is much more than that. There is good reason for allowing local school boards control over their school calendars. Different calendars, including different starting dates, work better for different schools and sometimes for different parts of the state. Local school boards best understand the local peoples needs.

School boards are responsible and responsive to the start date of the school calendar.

(1900) Rep. Sitte Do you know the earliest date anyone has started?

Wall: The 3rd week of August

Chairman Kelsch Mandan started one year on the 15/16 of August.

Closed hearing on HB 1156

(2033) Rep. Herbel Motioned to DO NOT PASS, Vice Chair Johnson second the motion.

Discussion:

Rep. Sitte Mandan started early one year and since then moved it back. What if schools start no earlier than Monday prior to Labor day.

Chairman Kelsch : Rep. Hanson would you like to tell us about your usual amendment.

Rep. Hanson : Fargo has something if the labor day is late and you start before, and when labor day is early you start after the holiday. But that is a loosing cause.

Rep. Haas Economic change for the state, maybe we should support this bill if there is a good reason. I would support the passage of this bill.

Rep. Hawken: There is no law saying that schools cant start after the holiday. Fargo does.

Perhaps we are looking at this backwards, we should be worrying about when schools start, but

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Doreen Hall
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