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Sal Costa Rickford  
Operator's Signature

10/3/03  
Date

2003 HOUSE EDUCATION  
HB 1259

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2003 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES  
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1259  
House Education Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date January 22, 2003

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	x		855-4370
		x	88-616
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Linda Fiechter</i>			

Minutes: Chairman Kelsch opened he hearing on HB1259

**Rep. Meler, District 32**

I have introduced this bill at the request of my constituent, Sonna Anderson. In researching this issue I learned that the Legislature has removed the limitations on salaries paid to local political subdivisions. Most recently for city commissioners in the last session. I was surprised to learn that there is a vast differences in salaries paid to our public servants, who give their time and talent to the public good. I encourage you to listen to the testimony offered on this bill and to vote a DO PASS out of committee.

**(988) Sonna Anderson, President of the Bismarck Public School Board, See Attached**

**Testimony**

**(1367) Rep. Sitte :** Would it be wise to place a cap on the salaries?

**Anderson:** I can't tell you what has been done across at he state I know that no school pays for a full time position. I don't see a need for a cap, it has to fit in our budgets are public.

**Chairman Kelsch:** You must stay within your budgets.

*La Costa Rickford*  
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**Rep. Hawken:** Fargo doesn't pay any salary, Moorhead people get over \$3,000 a year.

**Rep. Mueller** Why did you run for the school board?

**Anderson:** When I ran there was some there heated issues and I felt the call to step forward.

**Rep. Muelle:** The compensation that you receive, is that a factor for you to run?

**Anderson:** Not when I ran, But for some they won't run because of the compensation isn't enough for their situation.

**Chairman Kelsch** Why don't you tell the committee about the last election.

**Anderson:** The last election in Bismarck, we had 4 openings on a 5 person board. Two were running unopposed and one position was fill 1 week ahead of the deadline and then people put their names in for a write in.

**Chairman Kelsch** As large as Bismarck is they could not get candidates to fill the position.

**Rep. Hanson** What do you expect the salary to be?

**Anderson:** I would feel comfortable with 300/400/500 per month. We meet a lot and we may attract more candidates if the salary compensated for the time.

**(1826) Ken Astrup, Jamestown School Board President**

I am here in Support of HB 1259 for a couple of reasons. First, today school districts in the state are responsible for budgets and a large number of employees which are larger than most city and county governments that they are located in. Jamestown city council members receive \$600/month, they meet approx. 40 times a year and they have a budget about the size of ours, but with fewer employees. The county commissioners receive \$901.76/month, plus health insurance benefits, their budget is about the size of the school district and they also have far less employees.

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The second issue is the compensation for the amount of time and effort to be a board member.

There is more than just a meeting a month, the fewest board meetings I have had in a given year is 43, during the last four years it has averaged 68 meetings. I know of no board members who runs for the compensation. I would believe that most board members run for the same reason, for the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our children. I ask for your support on this bill with a DO PASS.

**(2000) Parrell Grossman, Bismarck Public School Board Member, See Attached Testimony  
Chairman Kelsch Explain the last election in Bismarck.**

**Grossman:** Described the lack of any candidates, lack of interest and several possible candidates were concerned with the amount of commitment time and compensation.

**Rep. Meier:** The recent year the situation of Riverside and Richholt, how many hours did you designate to this situation alone.

**Grossman:** This was a very intense period, with visiting with parents, research, meetings, hearings, etc. Each of us put many hours into this decision. The were many people that are affected by our decision.

**Rep. Hanson** You are probably not the only one who is loosing money per day on elected positions. When I started we were paid \$5/day, even at \$75 /day I was loosing about \$3,000 a session to come out here..

**Grossman:** I understand that kind of compensation. We are looking at the comparison just to make it more equal.

**Rep. Mueller** how do you think your constituents are going to receive the word about the increase of the money paid.

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**Grossman:** I think that is a good question. I feel that for the most part it will be well received. I think that there will always be individuals who will say that he/she choose to serve in that position, and he/she should not be doing it for the compensation. We will be opened up for criticism.

**(3400) Barbara Norby, NDSBA, See Attached Testimony .**

**Rep Hawken:** There are some states they have FTE, making \$25,000 with an office, staff and benefits, are there some states still doing this?

**Norby:** Yes there are some states that are doing this such as California and Florida.

**Rep. Mueller** Are we all over the board on compensation, do some do a flat amount for meeting?

**Norby:** I do not know the exact amount of districts. Some are paid \$25/meeting some \$1000/yr. less social security and income taxes.

**Nancy Sand, NDEA**

The work that the school board does is tremendous. I feel that the school boards will be very careful with this privilege of raising their compensation, they have to answer to their constituents.

**Dan Kuntz, Bismarck School Board**

I took this job, as a volunteer. We have had to make some very difficult decisions, termination's, school closings, budget. But I am concerned about the inability to attract people to the position. I have the flexibility and so do some of the other members. But there may be others who do not have the flexibility and time away from their jobs could prove hardship and they will need the compensation.

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OPPOSITION: none

Closed hearing

Opened the committee work:

Rep. Meier motioned for a DO PASS on HB 1259, Rep. Haas seconded

Discussion:

Rep. Hanson Any caps for any other county commissioners, city council?

Rep. Hawken: I found the city people and there is no caps, nothing on county pay.

Rep. Haas Is this a little presumptuous of us to think that we have to control what the maximum the school board can vote to pay themselves, when we in the legislature have total control over our salary?

Rep. Hanson the Governor can veto our bill, where the city council and county commissioners can't.

Rep. Solberg School boards members have a position that is equally thankless and just a little figure here, the Bismarck school board members received approx. \$3/hour.

Rep. Mueller I'm going to stand in opposition of 1259 for the simple fact that this is about volunteerism. Service learning is all about teaching our young people to become involved for the experience not for the money.

Rep. Sitte I do respect you opinion Rep. Mueller, but what happens if we don't give school boards this option, with only people who are attorney, who can take time out of their day to participate. I would like to see it more open for the average citizens who maybe have to leave a small business or job to attend.

DO PASS 11-1-2 Rep. Meier will carry the bill to the floor.

**FISCAL NOTE STATEMENT**

House Bill or Resolution No. 1259

This bill or resolution appears to affect revenues, expenditures, or fiscal liability of counties, cities, or school districts. However, no state agency has primary responsibility for compiling and maintaining the information necessary for the proper preparation of a fiscal note regarding this bill or resolution. Pursuant to Joint Rule 502, this statement meets the fiscal note requirement.

John Walstad  
Code Revisor

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