

2009 SENATE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

SB 2436

## 2009 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 2436

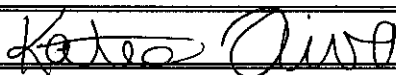
Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 02/12/09

Recorder Job Number: 9299

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Committee was called back to order by Senator Dever.

The prime sponsor of this bill in Minot and asked to submit his testimony written, it will stand as positive testimony

See attachment #1

**Alvin Jager:** See attached testimony #2.

**Senator Dever:** The existing law says minimum of 1?

**Dannette Odenbach:** See attached testimony #3.

**Senator Dever:** Changes made in last election?

**Dannette Odenbach:** As with any new policy there needs to be a review phase. Anything beyond primary was what the feedback was on.

**Senator Dever:** Different issue for different counties. Anyone else to testify on SB 2436?

Senator Dever closed the public hearing on SB2436.

## 2009 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No.2436

Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 02/12/09

Recorder Job Number: 9304

Committee Clerk Signature

*Kate Ouel*

Minutes:

A motion was made for a do not pass be Senator Oehlke with a second by Senator Cook.

There was no discussion and the motion carried 5-0 with Senator Cook carrying the bill.



**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)**  
February 12, 2009 1:58 p.m.

**Module No: SR-28-2535**  
**Carrier: Cook**  
**Insert LC: . Title: .**

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**SB 2436: Government and Veterans Affairs Committee (Sen. Dever, Chairman)**  
recommends **DO NOT PASS** (5 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING).  
SB 2436 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2009 TESTIMONY

SB 2436

**Senator David O'Connell**  
**Testimony in support of SB 2436**

SB 2436 is a bill designed to ensure that each district has more than one polling location. This bill was designed with ease of access to polling locations in mind. I have heard stories of people in some districts having to drive sixty miles or more to get to a location for them to vote. That isn't right. It should be easy for a person to exercise their right to vote and it is the duty of government to ensure that it is easy.

Requiring someone to drive for two hours or more to vote is an unfair burden. This is especially true for a person who works 8am to 5pm. They obviously can't get to a polling location over their lunch break. That leaves only after work, when many people are cooking dinner or hauling kids to practice or other after school activities to try to squeeze in a fundamental right in the United States; the right to vote.

There is also the concern of fuel prices. In today's economy \$2 per gallon is considered a relatively low price. Let's assume 13 miles per gallon gas mileage for the average vehicle; that comes out to \$18.46 just in gas to vote. Then there is the cost of lost time driving and lost time with the family. There are many people who find this too large of a burden to bother voting, not only in dollar costs, but in time costs as well. If this is the case, these people are disenfranchised simply because of where they live.

We can do better than that. By ensuring there is more than one polling location per district we improve citizens' access to those polling locations. By improving access to polling locations we make it easier for people to exercise their right to vote. At the risk of sounding cliché, elections are the chance for the citizens to voice their opinions and concerns. If we make it easier for people to exercise their right to vote we will have a better picture of the citizens' opinions and concerns and the government can make better policy. And that is always the end goal for us in the legislature, to make good policy. Let's pass a bill that improves access to polling locations for citizens and gives us, the legislature, the tools we need to make good public policy. I support this legislation and ask that you do the same.

ALVIN A. JAEGER  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
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**SECRETARY OF STATE**  
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February 12, 2009

TO: Senator Dever, Chairman,  
and Members of the Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

FR: Al Jaeger, Secretary of State

RE: SB 2436 – Mail Ballot Polling Locations

As the state's chief election official, I request a Do Not Pass recommendation on this bill. The number of polling locations used in a county that votes by mail should not be mandated in state law because one size does not fit all.

In HB 1343, which was passed in the House by a vote of 94 to 0, the law is made clear that a county has the option of having more than one polling location open on election day. It is a decision best made at the county level.



**TESTIMONY TO THE  
SENATE GOVERNMENT & VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

Prepared February 12, 2009 by

Danette Odenbach

North Dakota Association of Counties

**REGARDING SENATE BILL 2436**

Chairman Dever and members of the Senate GVA Committee:

The North Dakota Association of Counties (NDACo) submits this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 2436.

Under current law, counties using vote by mail are authorized to operate more than one poll site on Election Day. Allowing the counties and their citizens the flexibility to make those decisions keeps the process close to and reflective of the will of the voters.

By requiring counties to operate no less than two sites, the state would essentially be forcing a mandate on counties where there is not a citizen demand or a need; a mandate which would result only in increased expenses for no citizen gain.

The North Dakota Association of Counties appreciates urges a Do Not Pass recommendation on Senate Bill 2436.