



1 HB 1367 – Date of Adoption and Referral of Budgets

2 NDCEL Testimony in Opposition

3 Chairman Headland and members of the House Finance and Taxation Committee, for the record,
4 my name is Dr. Aimee Copas – I serve as the Executive Director for the North Dakota Council of
5 Educational Leaders representing your School Superintendents, Business Officials, Principals, and
6 all other Directors and school leaders in our buildings.

7 We are here today to express our concern for this bill. This bill has been filed for the prior two
8 sessions and has been resoundingly defeated in the House each time. A few years ago – all the
9 political subdivisions listed in this bill worked diligently in partnership with the legislature to
10 construct our transparency in taxation legislation that is in place and being executed today. Every
11 voter in this state receives notification for all of the hearings impacting them. That statement also
12 shows the amount being asked by each and every political subdivision. That annual open meeting
13 that takes place is a wonderful opportunity for our patrons to come and be a part of the process. If
14 there was concern about the amount being asked of them, there are avenues in which to be a part
15 of the solution.

16 What we’ve found in relation to our schools, is that our patrons are not expressing discontent. In
17 most of our districts, very few if any attend, and when they do, we hear it is usually just to observe
18 the process and they are happy with the work their schools are doing. If you recall, districts were
19 once able to ask for up to 185 mills from their patrons and now we are limited to 60 mills for the
20 school funding formula and we have local discretion through our boards to ask for up to 12 more.
21 In that level of authority is in place but most districts choose not to – only 42 districts have maxed
22 out their mills and many of those districts have voter approved excess mill levy authority. Please
23 know – schools are already capped – and are the only political subdivision that has caps – to ask
24 for more we DO have to go to a vote. No district is getting more than authorized by government
25 and the funding formula or they already have voter approval.

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for all students in North Dakota.*

Executive Director: Aimee Copas-----Assistant Director: Russ Ziegler



1 To ask for an annual vote is a poor use of taxpayer dollars not to mention it would decimate the
2 transparent partnership process put into place recently by this legislature. There are other bills
3 offered to continue to help with understandability and transparency such as the one that changes
4 how we communicate with the public from mills to dollars. Another step in the right direction
5 making this bill unnecessary.

6 We ask you to trust our locally elected school boards to be good fiscal stewards in our communities
7 and the communities in which they live and serve, and for our patrons to take advantage of process
8 already in place of there is any objection to what is done at the local level. We do ask for this
9 committee to send this bill out with a Do Not Pass just as you did with a similar bills the past two
10 sessions.

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