

1 HB1367– Relating to Adoption and Referral of Preliminary
2 Budgets

3 Mandan Public Schools – Mike Bitz, Superintendent

4 Good afternoon Chairman Hedland and members of the House
5 Finance & Taxation Committee. For the record, my name is Mike
6 Bitz. I am fortunate to serve as the superintendent for Mandan
7 Public Schools. I am here today to oppose HB1367. I will be
8 brief.

9 Before I begin, I want to clarify that in my 13 years as
10 superintendent of Mandan Schools, we have only raised taxes as
11 a result of two successful voter approved referendums and to
12 maintain the minimum local contribution of 60 mills in our
13 general fund.

14 While I am sympathetic to what Rep. Bellew is experiencing with
15 his taxes in Minot, the logistics proposed in his bill are not
16 workable. First, school districts do not even have a reliable
17 estimate of their taxable valuation on July 10th. Without knowing
18 the taxable valuation, it is not possible to set a revenue budget.

1 Secondly, and probably more importantly, the timeline is not
2 workable. There are only 81 days between July 10th, (the deadline
3 set in this bill), and Oct. 10th, (the deadline for taxing entities to
4 get their levy requests to the county so tax statements can be
5 prepared). It would not be possible for the district to publish a
6 notice of the preliminary budget in the paper for two consecutive
7 weeks (14 days) and then to allow a concerned patron to get the
8 wording approved on a petition, circulate the petition (up to 90
9 days), have the signatures on the petition verified (up to 30 days),
10 and then, in the event that a special election was necessary, for
11 the district to meet all the publication deadlines (14 days), and
12 absentee ballot deadlines (40 days) required in law for a special
13 election.

14 I urge you to vote No on HB1367, and I would be happy to answer
15 any questions you may have.

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