



## **Advocating on Ballot Measures as an Individual Citizen**

(When you also serve on a School Board)

As school board members and school officials, it's important to understand the legal boundaries when it comes to political activities and the use of school resources. Here's what you need to know:

### 1. The Basics:

- North Dakota law prohibits using school district property or services for political purposes.
- This is to ensure fairness and prevent misuse of public resources.

### 2. Key Terms:

- **Political purpose:** Any activity supporting or opposing a ballot measure or a candidate's election.
- **Property:** Includes things like school email accounts, vehicles, phones, office equipment, money, and buildings.
- **Services:** Includes the work of school employees during their regular hours.

### 3. What You **Can Do**:

- Express your personal opinion as a private citizen.
- Provide factual, unbiased information about ballot measures.
- Use public buildings as allowed by law.

### 4. What You **Can't Do**:

- Use any school resources to support your personal political views.
- Use school resources to advocate for or against a ballot measure.
- Speak on behalf of the school district without authorization.
- Share personal opinions on political matters when acting as a board member.

### 5. Providing Information:

- You can share factual information about ballot questions to educate voters.
- This information must be neutral and not advocate for or against the issue.

### 6. Consequences:

- Violating these rules is considered a "corrupt practice" under North Dakota law.
- It's typically treated as a class A misdemeanor.

**Remember:** When you're acting in your official capacity as a board member, stay neutral on political issues and don't use school resources for political purposes. When expressing personal political views, do so as a private citizen, using your own resources. Make sure your employees also understand these boundaries.

If you're ever unsure about whether an action is appropriate, it's best to consult with the school district's legal counsel.