



United Voices for
**NDU-
Retired**

Issue 14
August 2024

Keep It Local

Join NDU in Opposing the
Initiated Ballot Measure That Would
Eliminate Property Tax in
North Dakota



The property taxes you pay are critical to the development of your community as they fund the public services available to you as a resident. If this measure passes, North Dakota would have to pay approximately \$1.329 billion more per year to make up for lost property taxes that provide vital public services, including schools, police and fire protection, snow removal, libraries, etc.

Proponents of the measure claim that we can continue to have great public services, a few of which are listed above, while simply not having to pay property taxes. They often claim that we can use the Legacy Fund (current balance around \$9 billion) and eliminate pork and waste. The specifics on these funding sources are limited and come painfully short of making up the shortfall.

THE END OF LOCAL CONTROL

This measure would strip local communities of their voice in determining their needs. Local governing bodies, such as city, county, school and park boards, are more accountable to residents and better equipped to respond to local issues. Repealing property taxes would undermine the ability of local governments to address community problems, making them dependent on state legislators sitting in Bismarck. Local governments understand community needs better than the state Legislature. Additionally, the law would take effect on January 1, leaving no time to plan how to fund local budgets for 2025.

ENDING PROPERTY TAX IS A SMOKE AND MIRRORS TAX/FEE SHIFT

Replacing property taxes with higher taxes elsewhere is not a viable solution. If this measure passes, local budgets would be frozen at 2024 levels, forcing the state and local governments to seek other revenue sources, leading to increased taxes and fees in other areas. For example, increasing the state sales tax to offset the loss of property tax revenue would make North Dakota one of the states with the highest sales tax rates in the nation. Ultimately, residents would still bear the cost, as eliminating property taxes doesn't resolve community funding needs. This shift would adversely affect the elderly, lower-income residents, and renters, as current exemptions would be replaced with higher fees or taxes. Repealing property taxes would inevitably result in a scramble to find replacement revenue, likely leading to higher sales taxes and special assessments.

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Keep It Local, Continued

PUBLIC SERVICES

Property taxes fund essential local services, including schools, law enforcement, fire protection, road maintenance, snow removal, parks, and libraries. Eliminating property taxes would jeopardize these critical services that ensure safety and infrastructure. Rural healthcare, schools, and public safety would be at greater risk, especially in areas where other taxes and fees are scarce. Contrary to some beliefs, political subdivisions do not have broad authority to impose and collect fees. Property taxes contribute 30-40% of school budgets and are a fundamental revenue source for townships, cities, counties, school districts, and special entities. Without this revenue, local governments would struggle to make new investments in community projects.

BAD FOR NORTH DAKOTA RESIDENTS

Should the measure pass, state dollars currently benefiting all North Dakotans would be reallocated and cut. Out-of-state property owners would enjoy services without paying taxes, benefiting the most from the elimination of property taxes. Residential, agricultural, and commercial properties owned by out-of-state interests would no longer contribute to the infrastructure and public services they benefit from.

GET INVOLVED!

The Keep It Local coalition needs you to win this crucial election in November.

CONNECT with the coalition to receive direct updates, volunteer, or display yard signs at: www.keepitlocalnd.org/connect

DONATE to help us raise awareness and ensure that North Dakotans understand the critical importance of maintaining property taxes to secure a safe, well-educated, and thriving community for all at: www.keepitlocalnd.org/donate

VOTE on November 5, 2024 to Keep it Local by finding your local polling place at: <https://vip.sos.nd.gov/wheretovote.aspx>

Be An Eagle

By Toni Gumeringer, NDU-Retired Advisory Board Southwest Member

What can 328 retired NEA members accomplish in two days? You would be surprised! On June 30 and July 1, 2024, I was privileged to be in Philadelphia to represent the North Dakota United-Retired members at the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting (RAM).

NEA-Retired President Ann Gibson challenged the retired members to be like an eagle. Unlike other birds that flap their wings endlessly, eagles lock their wings and glide. In locking their wings, eagles can accomplish more with less effort. We should all lock our wings and accomplish great things.

I want to pass on another inspirational challenge that we were given at the RAM. We have all heard a political ad or two in the past weeks with more to come before November. We were asked to vote not for the D or the R behind the name but focus on the E: How does the candidate vote on educational issues? How supportive are they of students and staff? What is their record on the E – education?

It was a whirlwind two days in the City of Brotherly Love with lots of great work accomplished. It was clear the NEA-Retired members can lock their wings, glide through hard work, and have the momentum to keep going in the right direction.

Value of Membership

By JoNell Bakke, NDU-Retired Advisory Board
Northeast Member

Congratulations on your retirement! You have served your state and community well, and we are proud of the work you have done. You have dedicated your life to the service and education of our future citizens and nothing can be more important. However, your role as a member of your professional organization is not done. You can continue to support and impact all retired members and those still working by your involvement in ND United Retired.

North Dakota United works to honor the service of NDU-Retired members with a secure, healthy, and productive retirement. Currently, NDU-Retired has over 1,600 members, which equates to nearly 17% of North Dakota United's total membership.

NDU-Retired members are working to:

- Strengthening public education, public services and healthcare, and their professions.
- Improving key federal and state programs, traditional pensions and healthcare coverage for today's and tomorrow's retirees.
- Helping affect positive change for North Dakota's children, public educators, public employees, and their communities.
- Protect and improve retirement and health benefits—including state pensions, Social Security and Medicare.
- Improve public education through mentoring, literacy, and intergenerational programs and activities.
- Achieve legislative and political action goals for public education and public service.

With NDU-Retired membership, you will be engaged, motivated, and connected with all members in order to advocate for our past, our present and our future. You will be able to monitor TFFR decisions, influence state legislative issues, lobby on behalf of retired public workers, and continue to participate in educational decision-making.

But the benefits don't end there. In addition, NDU-Retired provides its members with a wide range of benefits, such as:

- The NEA Educators' Liability Insurance Program covers retired members who substitute on a day-to-day basis
- Banking & Lending services, such as credit cards and personal loans
- Insurance programs, including life, dental & vision, medicare supplement, long-term care, and pet health
- Everyday savings on online shopping, flowers & gourmet gifts, warehouse club membership, cell phone service, magazine subscriptions, hearing aid program
- Home & Auto insurance and discounts
- Travel discounts on vacations & tours, car rental, and hotels
- North Dakota United's print and electronic publications
- Attendance at NDU conferences and NDU Delegate Assembly

To get involved, please contact Sarah Keiser at sarah.keiser@ndunited.org or 701.223.0450. Further information on activities and benefits can be found at www.ndunited.org/about/our-members/retired-member.



Active & Energized

By Karen Askerooth,
NDU-Retired President

I hope this finds you all enjoying the warm months. Your NDU-Retired Board has had a busy time!

April 19: The Board met in Bismarck for their Annual Board Meeting (all other meetings are held on Zoom). We were joined by our North Dakota Teacher of the Year Sheila Peterson, Physical Education and Peer-to-Peer Educator, and Athletic Coach from Wachter Middle School, Bismarck. What a wonderful informative time we had listening to her and speaking with her. We then got to work on planning for next year - more to come!

April 20: On to the NDU Delegate Assembly where you were represented by 10 engaged Delegates: Karen Askerooth, JoNell Bakke, Linda Benson, Mary Carlson, Dakota Draper, Toni Gumeringer, Gale Haug, Steve Hayton, Deb Johnson, and Bill Klimpel. Thank you to those delegates for representing our Retired members.

Stay tuned for more exciting plans for our North Dakota United-Retired members!
And REMEMBER WE ARE RETIRED BUT ACTIVE AND ENGERGIZED!



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