

Senate State Affairs Committee  
Re: HB 1200

February 27, 2023

My name is Tom Heinz, and I'd like to thank the members of the Committee for allowing me to send in my written testimony, as I'm not able to join you today. I'm a concerned business owner--like all businesses in South Dakota-- dependent on our state government working well and efficiently.

It's my strongly held view that the ballot initiative process is integral to good government in our state, and I'm writing to express my strong opposition to HB 1200, a bill that will upend the ballot initiative process in our state. Allow me to note that I grew up outside of Columbia, South Dakota which was also the burial site of, Father Robert Haire, who not only was the father of the ballot initiative process in South Dakota, but also in our nation itself. As I hope everyone on the Committee is aware, we were the first state to establish the right of citizens to directly affect the laws under which we are governed, and which perfectly fits our state motto: "Under God, the People Rule!"

As you know, HB 1200 requires 1000 valid signatures from all 35 state senate districts in the state, and if any state senate district doesn't meet that requirement, the initiative fails to qualify for the general election ballot.

There is a famous saying in our country: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" Well, the initiative process in our state isn't broken, it works as it should, and it gives people the right to take an active part in making the laws that govern them, rather than passively watching from afar while the legislative wheels turn in Pierre, sometimes imperfectly.

I respectfully ask the members of this committee to not forward this ill-designed, anti-democratic bill on to the Senate floor. It's very bad policy, and I hope it doesn't pass.

Sincerely,

Tom Heinz

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