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February 24, 2025

Senate Local Government Committee
South Dakota Senate

Subject: Letter of Opposition for House Bill (HB) 1218

Dear Members of the Senate Local Government Committee,

On behalf of the City of Brookings, I am writing to express our opposition to House Bill (HB) 1218. This legislation would strip municipalities, counties, and townships of their ability to regulate the possession of firearms by their employees, officers, and volunteers within government-owned buildings, facilities, and vehicles. We believe this measure undermines local governance and the right of our community to establish policies that align with our unique needs and public safety concerns.

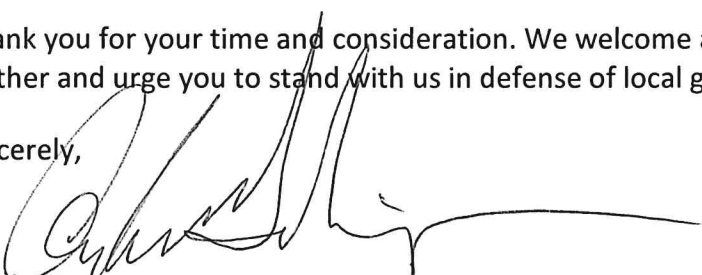
Local governments are best positioned to make decisions that serve the interests of their residents. HB 1218 takes away this discretion, imposing a one-size-fits-all approach that does not account for the varying safety considerations of different communities. The City of Brookings values the ability to adopt policies that promote security in our municipal facilities, ensuring a safe environment for both public employees and residents who utilize these spaces.

Furthermore, HB 1218 disregards the principle of local control, a foundational aspect of governance that allows municipalities to make decisions in the best interests of their constituents. By preventing us from enacting reasonable policies regarding firearms in government-owned spaces, this bill erodes our ability to fulfill our responsibilities to protect the public and manage city operations effectively.

We respectfully urge the Senate Local Government Committee to oppose HB 1218 and uphold the authority of local governments to make decisions that reflect the needs and priorities of their communities. Maintaining flexibility at the local level is essential to ensuring that cities like Brookings can continue to implement policies that best serve their residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We welcome any opportunity to discuss this matter further and urge you to stand with us in defense of local governance.

Sincerely,



Oepke G. Niemeyer
Mayor of Brookings