



May 19, 2025

The Honorable Michelle Strinden
President of the Senate
North Dakota Senate Chambers
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND

Re: Senate Bill 2001

Dear President Strinden:

Pursuant to Article V, Section 9 of the North Dakota Constitution, I have signed Senate Bill 2001 and filed it with the Secretary of State. I also have vetoed Section 6 of Senate Bill 2001.

Section 6 of Senate Bill 2001 reserves the 15th floor of the Capitol building "for the exclusive use of the legislative council." Legislative Council consists of attorneys, accountants, researchers, and auxiliary personnel who serve the members of the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Council currently occupies the entire second floor of the Capitol building except for one legislative committee room.

The 15th floor currently is occupied by the Department of Career and Technical Education (CTE), which recently remodeled the space. The acquisition of the newly remodeled space in Section 6 of Senate Bill 2001 was proposed without input or consultation with our administration, CTE, or anyone else from the executive branch and without public discussion during the 2023-2025 interim session. Legislative Council testified that additional space is needed to accommodate the increase of its staff from 45 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions to 70 FTEs as approved by the Legislative Assembly in Senate Bill 2001.

For government to work, it must work cohesively. It is crucial to foster open communication, align goals and objectives, and encourage collaboration across departments and levels. My administration is more than willing to help Legislative Council accommodate its growing staff by identifying available space in the Capitol building, including space on the 15th floor. However, requiring the acquisition of a specific floor of the Capitol building via state law is superfluous and undermines our ongoing efforts to find ways to better utilize the Capitol building's square footage to reduce costs and save taxpayers money.

The fact Section 6 of Senate Bill 2001 is a policy item logrolled into an appropriation bill does not restrict the executive's line-item veto authority. Doing so would force the executive to choose between accepting a standalone policy item or risking the entire appropriation for a state agency. Allowing the Legislative Assembly to shoehorn general substantive policy provisions into an appropriation bill, while not simultaneously allowing the executive to veto those provisions, would undermine our system of checks and balances, and violate the longstanding principle of separation of powers.

For the reasons said above, Section 6 of Senate Bill 2001 is vetoed.

Sincerely,


Kelly Armstrong
Governor