Bill Brief – House Bill 1071

Transfer Property, Relocate School for the Blind & the Visually Impaired and Build a New Facility for SDSBVI

What does this bill do?

• Authorizes the construction of a new facility for the South Dakota School for the Blind & the Visually Impaired (SDSBVI) on the current site of Jerde Hall.

• Estimated cost of the new facility for the SDSBVI is $13,558,993. The fund source for this project is entirely from funds raised by the Northern State University (NSU) Foundation.

• Because of the involvement of multiple trusts in the involved properties, this bill authorizes the Board of Regents to:
  o Swap Jerde Hall (trust land) with the Wolves Memorial Suites (non-trust land) on the NSU campus;
  o Demolish Jerde Hall;
  o Build a new facility for the SDSBVI on the Jerde Hall site;
  o Transfer the new SDSBVI facility on the Jerde Hall site to the SDSBVI trust; and
  o Transfer the current SDSBVI property to NSU.

Why is this necessary?

The Facility

• The current SDSBVI facility is more than 55 years old, occupies 65,000 square feet on 10 acres, and requires significant investments in maintenance and repair and much-needed renovations.
  o The new facility will be smaller: about 50,000 square feet occupying 3.5 acres.

• The current building is not air conditioned, but students and staff occupy the school year round.
  o The new facility will have central air and, as a LEED-certified building, it will use energy more efficiently. (LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, an internationally recognized green building certification system.)

• The current facility is not adequately wired for all the technology utilized by today’s students and teachers.

• With a new facility, a smaller footprint, and less outdoor space to maintain, the cost of maintenance will be reduced.
The Program

- Collaboration between NSU and SDSBVI benefits students at both schools.
- NSU’s classes to prepare teachers of the visually impaired will be held in an embedded classroom on the new site.
  - Growing this program will help South Dakota do its part to alleviate a shortage of teachers of the visually impaired.
- The new facility will provide SDSBVI students better access to 21st century technology.
- It will support valuable training and learning opportunities for students, through the use of stairs, elevators, and a more complex spatial environment.
- New LED Interior lighting will better meet student needs. The ability to adjust lighting will be greatly enhanced.
- Attention will be paid to interior materials and overall acoustics that support student learning and wayfinding.

The Fiscal Situation

- The South Dakota School and Public Lands’ holdings will increase in value.
- Funding for this project will come from NSU’s Educational Impact Campaign.
- Ongoing operations and maintenance of the facility will be sustained under the current SDSBVI budget.