

Chairperson Weisz and members of the committee,

My name is Kristin Rubbelke and I am the Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers North Dakota Chapter (NASW-ND). On behalf of NASW-ND, thank you for reading and considering our position on HB1313.

NASW-ND opposes HB 1313 in its entirety due to the assault it represents on established U.S. law, on individual rights, and on the ethical practice of social work.

Abortion is a legal procedure in the United States as a result of the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision which asserted that the U.S. Constitution protects a woman's freedom to choose to have an abortion. HB 1313 represents a clear assault on this Supreme Court decision, and is a violation of an individual woman's right to choose to have the procedure without fear of legal consequences. In addition, the morality of abortion is a question which requires individual thought and decision-making, not one which is answered by a law passed by government officials. Imposition of a religious perspective by the state legislature is a clear violation of the First Amendment of the Constitution.

HB 1313 also represents a threat to the ethical practice of social work. The NASW Ethical Standards state that a social worker's role "ensure[s] that all people have equal access to [] resources, employment, services, and opportunities." Additionally, it is the duty of social workers "to expand choice and opportunity for all people." HB 1313 would essentially prevent a social worker from discussing the pros and cons of abortion with a pregnant client and her family, inhibiting a hallmark of ethical social work practice which supports client self-determination.

NASW-ND strongly opposes HB 1313 in its entirety, and requests that it be withdrawn from consideration.

Sincerely,



Kristin Rubbelke, LSW
Executive Director
NASW-ND