

Testimony Opposed to House Bill 1443

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Good morning Chairman Klemin and members of the House Judiciary Committee. My name is Mark Jorritsma and I am the Executive Director of Family Policy Alliance of North Dakota. I am testifying in opposition to House Bill 1443 and respectfully request that you render a “DO NOT PASS” on this bill.

The stated purpose of this bill is to, “develop guidelines, a course of instruction, and ongoing training to assist peace officers in identifying and responding to bias crimes”. And what are bias crimes, you ask? According to Section 5 of the bill, bias crimes are criminal, illegal, or all other incidents intended to intimidate or harass a person or group:

... because of actual or perceived race, color, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, or ancestry ...

In other words, thought crimes. But it doesn’t end there. The bill goes on to say, “Each law enforcement agency shall collect information on reported bias crimes, *bias - motivations*, and on groups and individuals committing bias crimes.” That’s right, law enforcement needs to document bias motivations of these “bias crimes”. Then after all this is said and done, law enforcement needs to report bias crime information to the FBI – a federal agency that can then provide overwatch on whether North Dakotans are being unduly biased towards each others.

Come on, are we seriously considering this? The number of lawsuits and associated costs due to this bill would be staggering, and that doesn’t even include the \$335,000 in costs identified in the fiscal note.

I could list many, many more significant flaws with this proposed legislation, but suffice it to say that Family Policy Alliance of North Dakota believes that if voted into law, this legislation would be a vast intrusion of the state into citizens’ private lives and do nothing but quell the freedom of expression and freedom of speech that this country was founded upon.

It is for these reasons that we strongly urge your committee to vote a “DO NOT PASS” on HB1443. I would now be happy to stand for any questions.