

January 24th, 2023

From: ND Psychiatric Society

Re: In Opposition to HB 1332

Esteemed Chairman Weisz and Committee Members,

My name is Gabriela Balf, I am a psychiatrist in Bismarck and a Clinical Associate Professor at UND, and I speak on my behalf.

I cannot abide by my professional association's code of ethics and work with a therapist who encourages conversion therapy. Conversion therapy assumes that gender incongruence is a mental disorder and it can be cured by its application. The 21st century science is clear, IT IS NOT. Conversion therapy was **declared unethical in 1998** by the American Psychiatric Association. Its reiteration in the [Position Statement of 2018](#) further depicts the catastrophic consequences that this therapy has had in increasing the rates of depression, anxiety, suicide, substance use.

Therefore: Why persist in increasing minority stress for a small number of our children? When we face so many urgent issues related to the mental health of children in our state, why don't we spend your valuable time thinking about productive ways to address those, instead of wasting your days of selfless volunteering on **bills that are proven to harm and/or kill some of our children**, bills that will stain your legacy?

I urge you to be thoughtful when you vote for all the transgender bills that are coming your way, and listen to science. 21st century science.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Balf' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gabriela Balf-Soran, MD, MPH

Assoc Clin Prof – UND School of Medicine – Behavioral Sciences and Psychiatry Dept

ND Psychiatric Society Past-President

World Professional Association Transgender Health member