



NORTH DAKOTA

Family Alliance LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1362

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North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action
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Dear Chairman Weisz and honorable members of the House Human Services Committee. My name is Mark Jorritsma and I am the Executive Director of North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action. I am testifying on behalf of our organization in support of House Bill 1362 and respectfully request that you render a “DO PASS” on this bill, with suggestions.

The idea behind this bill is that parents are the final arbiters of all aspects of their children’s lives. North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action believes that the family was instituted by God and was intended as the optimal environment to raise children. To quote Sections 2a and 2b of the bill:

a. A parent possesses a fundamental liberty interest in the care, custody, and management of the parent's child and, at all times, retains a vital interest in preventing the irretrievable destruction of family life. b. It is in the best interest and welfare of a child to be raised under the care and supervision of the child's parents.

We wholeheartedly agree. It is sad that we as a society even need to specify that parents are the authority when it comes to their own children. We are not oblivious to single-parent families or relatives raising children – they are a significant portion of all U.S. families. Actually, this bill ensures that they, who are often marginalized or discounted because of their family structure, are granted the same liberties as traditional two-person families. You might also note that the bill does not exclude same-sex families – this bill does not play favorites.

We appreciate the sponsor’s inclusion of bill sections that address parents who are unfit for their responsibilities. There are limits to a parent’s rights and this is acknowledged.

As I said, we are very much in favor of this bill. That said, we have some concerns with sections 2c, 2f, and 2g. Nowhere in the bill is the term “normal family life” defined, as used in section 2c. Further, sections 2f and 2g seem to negate or at least confuse the issue of when

parental rights are to be trumped by governmental interests. For this reason, we suggest that these two sections be removed, or at the least clarified vis-à-vis section 3 of the bill which address parental abuse of their children.

As I stated, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action supports HB 1362 and requests that the committee render a “DO PASS” on the bill, with the request that the aforementioned sections are reviewed and amended as necessary.

Thank you for your time and I’d be happy to stand for any questions.