

68th Legislative Session

Senators: Luick and Meyer

Representatives: Cory and Karls

How many of you know a transgender person? How many of you have talked to a parent of a transgender youth?

I am here today in opposition to SB #2231. I am a citizen of North Dakota and a parent of a transgender person who is also a citizen of North Dakota.

As a parent and a person who believes in equality for all I must tell you that this bill is unjust and uncalled for. SB #2231 it is apparent that the authors of this bill have chosen to go after trans children.

This bill not only discriminates against transgender kids but also goes to great lengths to make their life at school unbearable, humiliating and demeaning.

I know first-hand how a negative school experience can harm the self-esteem and self-confidence of a transgender youth. How many of you can say you have even considered the ramifications of what this bill will do to the transgender youth of North Dakota?

People who are transgender are born this way; this is a medical fact and something that needs to be accepted and acknowledged by Cis-gender people. You cannot state some science such as DNA in your bills and yet ignore the other important science fact such as an MRI image.

An MRI of the brains of transgender kids are in fact the gender that they identify as which means their brain and body are in conflict with one another.

Male brains and female brains are formed differently, and the differences are visible using an MRI. This bill punishes people who are born transgender. Is that fair? Do you plan on making a bill that punishes kids who are born blind, born with cerebral palsy, and other physical conditions that may repel you?

Being repelled by someone because of that person uniqueness is the very definition of discrimination.

School is a place for learning. Here kids are taught the rules of how to interact with one another. Kids are told that inclusion is what the schools want but under this bill, inclusion is all but impossible unless the transgender youths deny who they are just to make others comfortable.

I cannot understand why an adult who knows nothing about these transgender children would go out of their way to make life difficult for transgender kids. What do you think this bill tells the Cisgender youth of North Dakota? Do you think this bill encourages Cisgender youth to accept and tolerate people who are not like them or is SB #2231 telling Cisgender students that anyone who doesn't fall in the same category as themselves is not worthy of being treated with dignity or respect.

Allowing a transgender youth to go to school as they see themselves hurts absolutely no one. Allowing a transgender youth to go to school and use their chosen name and pronouns that they identify with hurts no one and does not cause any more work for the school administration. In fact, CIS people would have an opportunity to learn about transgender people as well as the faculty, staff and administration of the school.

Transgender students pose as no threat to their CIS peers what so ever. My child didn't harm one person at all and yet she was a victim of a crime by a Cisgender peer at school.

My child went to school and showed respect to faculty and staff, yet those same adults disrespected her day after day and continued to do so even after their actions were made known to the administration. Those same faculty and administrators would go on to make my daughters school day as hard as possible even though they were warned not continue their behavior. Tell me who was the threat? Who did wrong in those cases?

My child was just doing what she had to do, go to school and she did her best to learn even though the situation was made difficult not because she was confused or struggled to be her true authentic self but by those who did not understand her or wanted to understand. I am writing in protest to this bill because it doesn't help anyone, what it does is harm the transgender youth of North Dakota.

SB #2231 bill tells the Cisgender youths that people who do not look like them or are different from them do not deserve the very rights and privileges they enjoy. SB #2231 tells Cisgender youths that it is ok to exclude people who are different and does not foster the skills of socializing and learning to work and live amongst those who are different from themselves. Cisgender kids will grow up feeling entitled and have the false idea that this is how the world outside of North Dakota is while in reality the world outside of North Dakota is very diverse and being diverse is the norm.

North Dakota Cisgender kids will be ill equipped to work among people of different cultures or backgrounds because they were not taught the skill of socializing in their formative years, the K-12 school years.

Not allowing transgender youths to use the pronouns, names and facilities isn't protecting anyone. By putting up these barriers, the transgender youth is put under extreme stress and mental anguish. How is using a pronoun that the transgender child identifies hurting a Cisgender peer, teacher or faculty or staff of a school? How is the child using their chosen name making the workload of faculty, staff or administration more strained? It doesn't.

ND youths are learning from what we, the adults of North Dakota, say and do; what we model. Our kids learn from what we say at home and how we treat people.

I taught my kids what Jesus taught which is to love and accept everyone. I taught my kids that no one is better than anyone else and to be nice. The very basics of what Christ taught is what this bill doesn't do.

The reality is that any one of you could easily be a parent of a transgender you, having your home state introduce laws that would harm your child. You could one day be like me, a parent of a transgender person, or maybe a grandparent. Maybe you learn that your niece or nephew who is comes out as transgender. You could easily be standing before a bunch of strangers, trying to make them understand that what they are doing is harmful to the transgender kids, kids who did nothing wrong but try to live as the person they see in the mirror.

No one should be forced to live as someone they aren't just to make strangers happy. Why are the authors of SB #2231 so threatened by transgender kids? There's been no incidents in ND that warrants such a bill as SB#2231. Would you like it if I forced your child to live as the gender that a stranger thought they should be just because they were uncomfortable with who your child is?

My child is happy and healthy living a life as her authentic self. She didn't hurt one person in doing so. I am so glad I had the insight to do what was right and help my child become who she is now.

As a parent and legislator, are you willing to accept the consequence of this bill? Lives and impacted by SB #2231, don't forget that. Just because your child isn't transgender do not adopt the false narrative that this bill isn't harmful or that SB #2231 is protecting anyone.

If you have any doubts of what I have said, I encourage you to reach out to a transgender youth or the parent of a transgender person who lives in North Dakota. Using the wrong pronouns or names do hurt transgender children of North Dakota. Take it from me, I've seen the hurt first hand, have any of you? Do you care that this bill harms young people who live in North Dakota? Where is the humanity and empathy in this bill?

Respectfully,
Kristie Miller
Parent of transgender